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# FORTY YEARS AGO!

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A CONTRIBUTION TO

THE EARLY HISTORY

OF

JOLIET AND WILL COUNTY. I

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TWO LECTURES

DELIVERED BEFORE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF JOLIET,

BY



GEORGE H. WOODRUFF.

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DECEMBER 17TH, 1873, AND MARCH 24TH, 1874.

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## LETTER FROM HON. JOHN M. WILSON.

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CHICAGO, July 4th, 1874.

JAMES GOODSPEED, ESQ.,

*Dear Sir:*—The advance sheets of the Lectures of Hon. GEO. H. WOODRUFF, on the “*Early History of Joliet and Will County*,” are received. With most of the persons named I was acquainted, and many of the incidents related were known to me more than thirty years ago. The style of the Lectures is characteristic of the writer, direct and truthful, and at the same time fringed with a bit of good-natured exaggeration, which gives piquancy to the narration. A man who can so happily do this with the pen, has no cause to regret that he has not the pencil of Nast. To the early settlers of Will county, and their descendants, these Lectures cannot fail to be intensely interesting; recalling, as they do, persons and events that had been forgotten or but imperfectly remembered. To the general reader they give a reliable history of the early settlement of the county, and photographs by description and anecdote, of a large number of the early settlers, so accurate that the most unimaginative can realize the state of society at that era, made up as it was of the Yankee, the Hoosier, the Southron, the Celt, the Teuton—and of each class, representative men of more than average intelligence and enterprise. Friend Woodruff has rendered a valuable service to posterity in thus perpetuating the memory of persons and events which rest only in the remembrance of the generation to which he belongs. It is only by publishing in permanent form the essays or lectures embodying the history of an early settlement, that posterity can appreciate either the character of the early settlers or the condition of the country in a state of nature, and the wonderful changes wrought by civilization in less than forty years. The history of Will county is substantially the history of

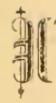
every county north of Peoria. The only men who can write the early history of these northern counties are fast passing away, and in a few years no one will be left to gratify that thirst for a knowledge of the Genesis, or beginning of things, which is so striking a characteristic of all races of men. Fable is sure to fill the gap which history leaves unoccupied.

Other settlements would do well to follow the example set by the "Will County Historical Society," and secure a reliable history and biography of those who laid the foundation upon which others have built.

Yours, truly,

JOHN M. WILSON.

## P R E F A C E.

T may seem like affectation to dignify so humble an effort with a preface; yet I have a word or two to say by way of explanation and apology.

I began the work of gathering material for these Lectures at the request of Capt. EGBERT PHELPS, of the Historical Society. When the suggestion was first made, I doubted that I could find enough to make one lecture; but I soon found that the difficulty would be to select and condense what I had gathered, into two; and that I should be obliged to leave many things unnoticed.

There is considerable matter in them which, from pity to my hearers, I omitted in the delivery, and some has also been added since.

I have taken considerable pains to make the historical portions correct, especially the names of "First Settlers," but still there may be errors. Any corrections or additions would be thankfully received. One or two errors discovered too late for correction in the text, will be found corrected in an appendix.

Some of the "Incidents" are given from recollection, others I tell as they were told me—carefully excluding everything that could give offense.

These Lectures are published in compliance with a general request from those who heard them, and through the generous proposal of Mr. GOODSPED, who, I trust, will be amply rewarded.

I wish to make my most grateful acknowledgements to Judge WILSON, of Chicago, for his kind and flattering letter of introduction, and especially for bestowing the title of which I have been so long deprived! The ambition of a lifetime is satisfied! "Nunc," etc.

GEO. H. WOODRUFF.



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# LECTURE I.

DELIVERED AT THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN  
JOLIET, DECEMBER 17TH, 1873.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

It seems to be a characteristic of all great states and great cities, that when they have arrived at a period of assured prosperity, and their importance has come to be fully recognized, that they begin to inquire into the beginnings of their history, and to ask : "Under what circumstances, and by what men, were the foundations laid?"

Hence, Rome had her story of Romulus and Remus; New York, the chronicles of the veracious Knickerbocker; and the sons of New England never tire of the story of the Mayflower.

It is not strange, then, that this Historical Society should wish to collect and preserve some record of the early days of JOLIET and WILL COUNTY, and to ask for the names of those who first trod in the retreating steps of the red man. This evening's lecture is an attempt to answer, as far as may be, these inquiries. It is, of course, an imperfect record ; yet it is the result of considerable inquiry. In one respect I labor under a great disadvantage. There are many still living—perhaps some here present—who know as much as I do about the matter, and hence I dare not avail myself of the usual resource of the annalist, and draw upon

my fancy for the embellishment of the few meagre facts. You must, therefore, expect only a dry detail.

One other thing embarrasses me. I shall be obliged to speak often in the first person singular—a thing which is disagreeable to a modest man—and I may occasionally seem to make myself the hero of my own story. But let it be charitably considered; this is my only chance to get into history!

Deidrich Knickerbocker, in his history of New York, begins with the creation of the world. I shall not go back as far as this, although I feel that the importance of my subject would justify me in going back to the flood, or the dispersion of Babel, did time permit.

Our story, then, will be for the most part, one of Forty Years Ago. **FOURTY YEARS!** How brief seems the period! It is indeed but a small fragment of the ages, and yet how great have been the changes, especially in Northern Illinois, which forty years have brought? Forty years ago, Chicago was little more than a trading and military post on the outskirts of civilization. Forty years ago, the Indian still lingered up and down these streams and groves, loath to leave the beautiful land he loved so well, and the bottoms where his squaw cultivated the maize, while he pursued the deer over the prairies, or trapped the mink and the otter along the streams. Forty years ago, although the “gorgeous surroundings” were here, Joliet was not even a dream. How much, too, of what we now consider indispensable to our comfort, has come into use within this brief period. Forty years ago, there was not fifty miles of railroad in the United States. Forty years ago, the telegraph was still sleeping, coiled up in the brain of Morse. California was only known as the name of a Mexican territory; and the Sacramento, the Colorado and the Oregon,

“—— heard no sound,  
Save their own dashings;”—

and the ledges and gulches of the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountains were unvexed by the pick of the miner. Forty years ago, no one had “struck oil,” and the reaper and the sewing machine had not been invented. Forty years ago “*crinoline*” had

not been introduced, and ten yards of calico was good enough, and ample enough, to cover the fair forms of our wives and daughters! With this *climax*, I come back to my subject!

In the 17th century, while France held possession of Canada and the Lakes, and disputed with England the possession of the entire north and west, the Jesuit Missionaries under the protection of France, and animated by the same zeal and self-sacrifice which has shed such lustre upon that society in China, India and Japan, accompanied the explorer and the trader, and in some instances preceded them, cheerfully confronting hardships, cruelty and death, in upholding before the red man the symbol of the cross. Many are the names, hardly less famous than that of Xavier, that adorn the records of French exploration in the northwest. Conspicuous among these is that of JAMES MARQUETTE, who, accompanied by a trader of the name of LOUIS JOLIET, in 1673, (just two hundred years ago the past summer), with five countrymen, pushed their canoes out from the head of Green Bay, up the Fox river to the divide which separates it from the Wisconsin, crossing which, they embark upon the latter in pursuit of that great river, which western Indians had told them, flowed somewhere at the west. In due time their voyage is successful, and they pass into the Mississippi, and float down its ample bosom as far as the Arkansas. Returning, they enter the Illinois. A tribe of Indians of that name occupy its banks, and invite Marquette to remain among them, but he returns with Joliet to Chicago, and there tarries for a time to preach the gospel to the Miamas, a tribe which then dwelt about that locality. Tradition says that Marquette and Joliet encamped upon the mound just below the city. However this may be, it, as well as that widening of the river just below, which we call a lake, and also the stream which we call Hickory Creek, were baptized with the name of JOLIET. A few years subsequently, La Salle and Hennepin crossed the short portage between the St. Joseph and Kankakee, in Indiana, and passed down into the Illinois as far as Peoria, where a trading and missionary post were established, and a fort was built, named by La Salle, *Creve Cœur*, from the hardships and disappointments of the enterprise. This

point has a history of much interest, and was known in early times as Fort Clark.

And here, for a hundred years, the French and Indians, who seem to have taken kindly to each other, held possession of this region. Of this period little is known, and therefore it is a rich field in which the poet and romanceist may weave his tales and idyls. No doubt Joliet had its Hiawathas and Minnehahas. Perhaps upon this very spot many a dusky wife or maiden has broidered the mocasins, or wove the wampum belt for the husband or lover, absent upon the chase or the war path. But our business is with sober history, and we leave romance to Capt. Phelps.

But it was not the design of Providence that this country should remain in the hands of France. Another type of civilization, and another type of christianity, was to come into the permanent possession of the lakes, and streams, and prairies of the northwest.

The peace of Paris, in 1763, terminated the rule of France; and, although for years many of the explorers, traders and missionaries remained, so that at the time of the admission of this State in 1818, it was estimated that there were within its limits two thousand of their descendants, *now*, there is nothing but a few names on different localities to remind us of French possession.

By the treaty of 1833, at Chicago, the red men surrendered *their last* claim to these fair lands; and in 1835, to the number of five thousand, they assembled at Chicago to receive their annuity—dance their last war dance in Illinois, and take up their march for new hunting grounds on the far Missouri.

At the admission of this State in 1818, it was almost an entire wilderness north of Alton and Edwardsville; yet Shadrach Bond, the first governor, in his first message, recommended a canal connecting Lake Michigan with the Illinois. The project had been suggested in 1814, during the war, in Niles' Register. In 1821, an appropriation of ten thousand dollars was voted for a survey, which was made, and the project was pronounced eminently practicable. In 1826, congress made the magnificent donation of three hundred thousand acres of land for its construction, being every alternate section in a strip ten miles wide, along the route. In

1829, the general assembly created a board of canal commissioners, and authorized them to sell lands; and under this act the title to some lands in this vicinity was obtained. Fortunately, however, they were soon withdrawn from market. In 1834-5, an act was passed creating a new canal board, and authorizing the governor to negotiate bonds, pledging the canal lands for their redemption. But it was not until at a special session in 1835, when, through the active exertions of Col. Strode, of Galena, who, as a senator, at that time represented all that part of the state north of, and including Peoria, the act was so amended as to pledge the credit of the state, that the bonds could be negotiated. This was done by Gov. Duncan, in 1836, and in the same year preparatory operations were commenced.

Meanwhile, stimulated by this canal project, and by the survey and bringing into market of the lands of the United States and the granting of pre-emption rights, as well as by the beauty and fertility of the country, emigration had set in toward this region, some of the earliest efforts of which I now proceed to detail.

We assign to the Rev. JESSE WALKER the honor of being the first white settler within the present bounds of Will county, although it might admit of question whether an itinerant preacher of the Methodist church could properly be called a *settler*. Jesse Walker was one of the early pioneers of Methodist christianity in Illinois. He was born in the state of Virginia in 1766, twenty-five years before the death of Wesley. He joined the church when twenty years of age, and entered the ministry on probation in 1804. He had married the daughter of a wealthy planter, who was an heir to much property in slaves. These she manumitted, and chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, and as the wife of a Methodist preacher, rather than enjoy the ease and plenty which would be secured by the sweat of the slave. In 1806, he accompanied Wm. McKendree (afterwards bishop) to Illinois, then a part of Indiana territory, to look at the country. They were highly pleased with it; and at the next meeting of conference were both appointed to a circuit within its bounds.

Walker returned from this conference to his family, arriving about noon—commenced immediately to prepare for the journey,

and by ten o'clock the next day, he and his family were on their way. The journey had to be made on horseback, and four horses were required—one for himself, one for his wife and youngest daughter, and one for his oldest daughter, a girl of sixteen, while the fourth carried the stock of books, which was part of the outfit of a Methodist preacher, the sale of which aided in ekeing out their scanty salary. Of course they could carry no "Saratoga trunks." Nor was there any need, for their wardrobe was confined to the one suit, beside that they wore, which was spun and wove by the mother and daughter. And yet there was no complaint of "nothing to wear!"

Jesse Walker became an able and efficient preacher of Methodist Christianity in Illinois, although he had received but a very limited education. In 1821, we find him reporting to conference in respect to his labors as a missionary among the Indians, and it was in this capacity that he came to the vicinity of Plainfield in 1826, where there was then, and for several years subsequently, an Indian village. In 1827 he was superintendent of Fox River Mission. He is said to have held the first camp meeting in the state, and the first quarterly meeting in Chicago, and also to have preached the first protestant sermon in St. Louis. In 1829 he had charge of the Des Plaines Mission, and formed the first class at Walker's Grove.

Many of these facts I have gathered from Mrs. D. C. Searles, of Troy township, who is a grand-daughter of Jesse Walker, and daughter of James Walker. I am also indebted to the book of "Father Beggs" for some of the incidents of his early life. He died in 1835, at the age of 69. Many valuable manuscripts left by Jesse Walker were in possession of Mrs. Searles, but they were burned a few years since, with the house of Mr. Searles.

He was accompanied in his journey to Plainfield, or, rather, Walker's Grove, as the beautiful grove was subsequently called, about one mile south of the present village of Plainfield, by his son-in-law, James Walker, a Tennessean, then from Ottawa, of which he was one of the earliest settlers. James Walker did not at that time remain, but returned to Walker's Grove in March, 1830, and made a permanent settlement. He brought with him from

Ottawa a horse power mill, which he set up, and proceeded at once to construct both a saw and grist mill on the Dupage. The grist mill was destroyed by a flood in 1837 or 1838. At this saw mill the lumber was sawed of which a Mr. Peck built the first *frame* house in Chicago, upon the southeast corner of La Salle and South Water streets, which lot had cost him eighty dollars. Reuben Flagg, named below, hauled the lumber to Chicago. Jas. Walker was a prominent man in the early history of our county, and I shall have occasion to mention his name again. He was one of our first representatives in the legislature.

Another Methodist preacher, S. R. Beggs, was also identified with the early history of Plainfield, and of the Methodist church in Will county, who settled on section sixteen of that township in 1831. Father Beggs is well known in Will county, and still survives, enjoying the honored old age promised to the servants of God.

In 1829, a Frenchman by the name of Vetel Vermette, settled in the same vicinity. Another importation was made to Chicago from Plainfield in the year 1832, when Father Beggs held his first quarterly meeting at Chicago. Timothy B. Clark (named below) took an ox team loaded with provisions to Chicago, to meet the extraordinary demand which would be made upon the provision market of Chicago by a few extra Methodists!

In the summer of 1830, Mr. Reuben Flagg left Vermont with his family, and after a journey of two months they arrived in the same vicinity on the 9th day of July. Passing through Chicago, they found it a village of about a dozen log houses, and on the route down passed two log cabins on the Des Plaines. He found on his arrival at Plainfield, besides the families of Walker and Vermette, already named, two others, those of Timothy B. Clark and Thomas Covel, who had come in the same spring from New England. From Detroit, Mr. Flagg was accompanied by Jedediah Wooley, sr., who bought out the claim of the Frenchman, Vermette, who left for pastures new.

These facts are gathered from a letter of Mr. Flagg's, written to H. N. Marsh, Esq., in 1851. Mr. Flagg also states that he knew of no other settlers in the county at that time, except three

families on Hickory Creek, Mr. Rice, Mr. Brown and Mr. Kercheval, and that the nearest white settler on the west was at Dixon's Ferry. We also gather from this letter, that the first white child born in Will county was his daughter, Samanthe E., born September 9th, 1830. We owe an apology for presuming to tell a lady's age—but the interest of this history demands it.

To this settlement was added, Wm. Bradford, John Shutliff, David, Chester and Enoch Smith, in 1832. Chester Ingersoll, James Gilson, Oliver Goss, Dea. Goodhue, Hardy Metcalf, Benj. Shutliff, Jason Flanders, John Bill, W. W. Wattles, Robert W. Chapman and others, soon after the close of the Sac war. The village of Plainfield was laid off by Chester Ingersoll in August, 1834.

We pass now to the settlement on Hickory Creek. The compiler of the new "Combination Map of Will County," quotes a letter from a Mr. W. R. Rice, in which he says: "In June, 1829, Miller Ainsley, William Rice and myself, left Fountain county, Indiana, to look at the far west. We struck the Iroquois, which we followed to the Kankakee, keeping down the latter to the Des Plaines, up which we went until we reached Hickory Creek, where we found a Mr. Brown, and old Col. Sayer, living in an old Indian bark shanty, near where Dr. Allen's house now stands, and about eighty rods west, across the creek, was an old Mr. Friend, who had the body of a log cabin up." These statements are no doubt reliable. I will add, that the Mr. Brown spoken of, died soon after, in November, 1830, and was buried on the Davidson farm—probably the first burial of a white person in Will county. Col. Sayer, above named, built a saw mill on the north side of the creek from where the red mill now stands, and Mr. Mansfield Wheeler, who came in the fall of 1833, went into partnership with him. At this mill was sawed the lumber of which the first frame houses in Joliet were built.

To this Hickory Creek settlement were added in 1830: Mr. Lewis Kercheval and son, William Rice, sr., John Gougar, Michael Runyon, Jerrod Runyon and James Emmett. In 1831, John and Joseph Norman, Aaron Ware, Thomas and Abram Francis, Isaac

Pence and Samuel Pence. In 1832, Cornelius C. Van Horne, John Stitts, Peter Watkins and his two sons, William Gougar and sons, and Joseph, Alfred and James Johnson. The Johnsons located on Spring Creek, in the edge of Yankee Settlement. To these were added in 1833, John M., Isaac and Milton Reynolds, Judge Davidson and Matthew Van Horne. Henry Higginbotham came in 1834, and bought out Col. Sayer, and the saw mill firm became Wheeler & Higginbotham.

C. C. Van Horne was, in early times, one of the most prominent men in all the region. He was postmaster and justice of the peace, and transacted the business of the early settlers, and aided them in procuring pre-emptions. He was afterwards our first mayor under the present city charter.

Mrs. Kinzie, in her "Waubun," gives an account of a ball on Hickory Creek, (probably at Kercheval's), in 1831, at which *three* of the *five* single gentlemen then residing at Chicago were present. The ball commenced at two p. m., after a hospitable dinner, and lasted until the next morning. I suppose the Chicago gentlemen were better dressed, and could even then put on "city airs and style,"—at any rate, they had the smiles of the "belles" of Hickory and the other precincts, and the native beaux had to take back seats. This, of course, highly gratified the Chicago gents; but their satisfaction was dampened when, in the early dawn, they brought out their fine horses to return, and found that during the night, all three had lost their manes and tails!

About the same time another settlement was made, mostly on the south side of Hickory, in this township. Robert Stevens and David Maggard made claims in 1830, and came with their families in 1831. Robert Stephens located on the well-known Stephen's place, and David Maggard on the Bluff, about opposite the rolling mills. Philip Scott, William Bilsland, Major Cook and father, Daniel Robb, Jesse Cook, Reason Zarley and Benj. Maggard, also came in 1831. Seth Scott and Aaron Moore, in 1832. William Hadsell, in 1833. Joseph and Jacob Zumalt, in 1834. Reason Zarley, above named, was one of our earliest J. P.'s, and a prominent and influential man, and it is to him that our city is

indebted for a city clerk, and two editors, who know how to run a *reliable* democratic newspaper! David Maggard built the first house within the present city limits.

The old Sac trail divided somewhere near the cemetery, and one branch crossed at a ford a little below the present tannery, and passed up the bluff, through a ravine, and on west. The house of Maggard was on the edge of this ravine, and was standing not many years since. The other branch of the trail crossed at the ford just below the island, and passed on to Ottawa. This trail was a well-worn path, made by the Indians in their annual journeys from the west to Fort Malden, in Canada, to receive the presents which it was the cunning policy of the English government to continue to give them long after our independence. The fruit of this policy was seen in the war of 1812, in the massacre at Chicago, and other barbarities.

John Norman built a mill on this river, at the head of an island which took his name, just above the penitentiary. He built a dam across one branch, which threw the current into the other, in which he placed his wheel, while the shaft at the other end connected with the mill-gearing in a log mill. This mill, which is said to have had the tremendous capacity of twelve or fifteen bushels of corn in twenty-four hours, and which drove such a brisk opposition to the mills of Rochester, and the Wabash, was projected and completed *without any municipal aid!* I suppose that this mode of making the poor contribute to the capital of the rich, was not then devised. I remember visiting this mill in 1834. The island was then quite a romantic spot, being covered with a heavy growth of timber. The digging of the canal has almost obliterated the locality.

In the edges of the timber, lying along the Des Plaines and Jackson Creeks, and in the groves known as Jackson's, Reed's, Starr's and Troutman's, settlements were early made. Chas. Reed, Joseph Shoemaker and Wesley Jenkins, settled in Reed's grove in 1831. John and Thomas Coon, the two Kirkpatricks, Thomas Underwood, Eli Shoemaker, Charles Longmire, James Hemphill, Peter Eib and sons, Archibald Crowl, Henry and Lewis Linebar-

ger, Daniel Haight, John and Samuel Catron, Theophilus and Robert Watkins, settled in some one or other of these groves in 1831-2-3; and Benjamin and Joseph Shanks, Smith Johnson, John Brown, George Young, Peter Brown and son, and R. J. Boylan, in 1833-4.

To the credit of Jackson grove settlement it ought to be mentioned, that they built a school house as early as 1833, and Henry Watkins, of the Hickory Creek settlement, taught the same.

We have mentioned "the Johnsons" as settling on Spring Creek, in the edge of Yankee Settlement. They were "Hoosiers," in the language of that day; but most of the settlers in Homer were from the east, and it was early called "Yankee Settlement."

In the summer of 1831, Holder Sisson, a resident of Chautauque county, N. Y., who had previously visited the west, with his family, and Selah Laufear and Orrin Stevens, with their families, from the same county, came around the lakes in a schooner, and after a somewhat stormy passage, landed at the obscure port of Chicago, in the latter part of July. Harry Boardman, who settled in East Dupage, came in the same vessel. After a short stay in Chicago, they came to Yankee Settlement, made "claims," and commenced improvements, and built log cabins. They found already there, the families of Armstead Runyon, Edward Poor, and Benjamin Butterfield. I think Edward Poor was the first settler in this neighborhood. His is the first name that occurs upon our county records, as transcribed from Cook county, of which we were then a part.

The following are the names of other settlers in those localities now included in the town of Homer, and that part of Lockport east of the river, and which were known in early days as "Yankee Settlement," Gooding's Grove and Hadley: Before the Sac war, Jas. Richie, James Glover, Abijah Watson, John Pettyjohn, Wm. McGaffery, Peter Polly, Joseph McCune, Daniel Mack, John Blackstone, Nathaniel Weeks, William Ashing, — Goodenow, Joseph Cox, Dick Boilvin and Uriah Wentworth. Some of these persons did not return after the "stampede" occasioned by the

Sac war. Goodenow, Potly and McCune, on their return, settled in other localities in the county.

The following persons settled in the localities named, soon after the war, say in the years 1832-3 and 4: Thomas Smith, Eben Beach, Charles M. Grey, George Grey, Orange Chauncy, Levi Hartwell, Jiroh Rowley and sons, W. H. Frazier, Alanson Granger, Addison Collins, Horace Messinger, John Lane, Lucius Case, H. S. Mason, Dr. Moses Porter, Abram Snapp, Deacon Williams, Benjamin Weaver, Hiram Rowley, Levi Savage, L. C. Chamberlin, Frederick Collins, William Bandle, Samuel Anderson, John Griswold, Comstock Hanford, Nathan Hopkins, John Fitzsimmons, Cyrus Cross, Andrew Frank, Aaron Hopkins, Rev. Mr. Ambrose and Lyman Cross.

The following persons settled in "Gooding's Grove," and gave the name to the locality: Deacon James Gooding and his three sons, James Gooding, Jr., William Gooding and Jasper A. Gooding, and his nephew, Charles Gooding, in 1832-3.

A Rev. Mr. Kirby was also an early settler, and had charge of a Presbyterian church in Hadley, organized by Rev. Jeremiah Porter, the pioneer of the American Home Mission Society in the northwest. This, I think, was, exclusive of the "classes" formed by itinerant preachers of the Methodist church, the first church organized in Will county.

A Mr. Freeman, also organized a Baptist church in Yankee Settlement about the same time, of sixteen members. Yankee Settlement was also a station of Father Beggs' in 1833, together with Walker's Grove, East Dupage, Hickory Creek and Reed's Grove.

John Lane was famous in the early days as a manufacturer of breaking plows. Addison Collins was, at one time, our county surveyor, and also represented us in the General Assembly.

John Blackstone, generally known as Judge Blackstone, was a man of property and influence. He was the first justice of the peace in Yankee Settlement. Judge Caton remembers going down there from Chicago to try a suit before him in 1833, which was probably the first law suit in the county.

Jiroh Rowly, generally known as Capt. Rowly, was a promin-

ent man in the early history of our county. He had formerly been a contractor on the Erie canal, having built the great embankment near Rochester. While engaged in this job, Gov. Clinton passed over the route to look after its interests, and visited the job of Rowley, about which he had a good deal of anxiety, as it was a heavy and difficult work. While the Governor was looking on with some gentlemen visitors, Rowley spoke pretty sharply to him and his friends, telling them to get out of the way. Governor Clinton, instead of being offended, remarked to his friends, that he should go home with his mind at ease about the job, as Capt. Rowley evidently "meant business."

William Gooding (named in the above list) was subsequently well known as the able and efficient engineer-in-chief of our canal.

Yankee Settlement was especially famous among the boys of 1835-6, as a good place to go to see the girls. I presume it still is!

Holder Sisson, above named, who was one of the first county commissioners of this county, settled on the Hanford place, in the present town of Lockport, in 1831, and afterwards moved across the river, and located on, or under, the western bluff. Lyman Hawley and sons, Justin Taylor, Thomas and Harvey Reed, and William Rogers, settled on the same side in 1831-2 and 3. It is said that Butterfield, whose name was mentioned in the Yankee Settlement list, built the first house within the present township of Lockport, and that a Mr. Everden built the first log house on the site of the present city, in 1831, which he sold to Armstead Runyon, who laid out the first town plat in 1836, now called North Lockport, but formerly called Runyon's Town. The site on which most of the present city is now located, was laid out by the canal commissioners, in 1837, and the good taste of the engineer-in-chief is apparent in its wide and beautiful streets. West Lockport was laid out by William Rogers, Lyman Hawley, William Gooding and E. S. Prescott, who also built the stone mill, in 1836. West Lockport, at one time, was the most flourishing part of the town.

In the upper Hickory Creek timber, in what is now known as the town of Frankfort, it is said that a Mr. Osborn settled as early as 1828, but finding it rather lonesome, he returned to the State of

Indiana. William Moore, Robert Williams, John McGoveny and sons, John McDeed, and a Mr. Ghost, came in 1831. Daniel Lambert, John Duncan, James Troutman and Hiram Wood, in 1832. Allen and Lysander Denny, Ambrose Doty, Charles Marshall, Francis Owen, Eliphælt Atkins, Samuel Haven and Josiah Holden, in 1834 or 5.

A settlement was made on the east branch of the Dupage as early as 1830, by Pierce Hawley, Stephen J. and Willard Scott, and Ralph Stowell. In 1831, it was increased by the coming of Israel Blodgett, Robert Strong, John Dudley, Harry Boardman, and Seth Westcott; and 1832, by Jonathan Royce, Isaac Scarritt, Lester Peet, Simon Ferrill and John Barber; and in 1833 and 4, Samuel Goodrich, Andrew Godfrey, Harry and Philip Lord, Samuel Whallen and William Smith.

Isaac Scarritt was a Methodist itinerant preacher, a cotemporary of Beggs and Walker, and succeeded Walker in 1828, as Superintendent of Fox River Mission. Samuel Whallon was county commissioner in the years 1841-2-3, and has lately died at the ripe age of 94. Col. Smith, will be well remembered as one of the prominent residents of this city.

Mrs. Kinzie, in "Waubun," speaks of stopping at Hawley's over night, after a long exposure in traveling from Fort Winnebago to Chicago, in the winter of 1831. A brother of Hawley's, a Methodist preacher, was killed by the Indians, near his place, in 1832, after cruel torture.

In that part of the town of Channahon which lies east of the Des Plaines river, Joseph McCune, recently deceased, settled in 1832, also John Troutman, the same year, and Robert Thornberg and sons, in 1833. On the river, Seymour Treat and Dr. Treat, his son, settled in 1833, and built a grist-mill at the foot of an island which took their name.

The following persons settled in that part of the town which lies between the Des Plaine and Dupage, in the years 1832-3-4: Isaac Jessup, William E. Peck, H. D. Risley, Peter McCowan. Capt. Willard, Michael Morehouse, Jedediah and Walter Emes, Joseph N. Fryer. Ira Knapp, Hosea Buell, George and Russell

Tryon, Uncle "Bont" Schermerhorn and his two sons, Peter and Jacob B. and John Ward; and in 1835, Joseph and Dr. Lewis, Isaac and Burke Van Alstine, and, under the Fifteenth Amendment, we must not omit to mention "Nigger Dick."

This locality was a favorite one of the Indians. They had a village there at one time, and the traces of their cultivation could be seen there in 1835, and the mounds where they buried their dead. I believe they cultivated corn there as late as 1834. It is said the squaws made very neat cultivators. There used to be the grave of an Indian near Treat's, in which the body was partly out of the ground, in a sitting posture, and surrounded by rails. This was supposed to be the grave of a prominent man, as they took great pains to visit it when going up and down the river.

I remember having seen, north of Joliet, just this side of the Sanger farm, in 1834 or 5, the *grave* of an Indian child, buried in the top of a tree—if one may be allowed so grave a bull. The body was placed in two rough slabs, hollowed out and fastened together, and to the tree, by strips of bark. I do not know what the Indian's idea was in thus disposing of an infant's body, but I can fancy it a dim reflection from the memorable words of our Savior, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." As the spirit of the child had taken its flight to the skies, they would find place the deserted casket as near to it as possible!

The village of Channahon was laid out by the Canal Trustees, by whom it was named *Snifton*, after one of their number. Through the influence of Judge Peck it was changed to Channahon—an Indian word, which means, the meeting of the waters—a beautiful and appropriate name, and I presume the change has been no material damage to W. H. Swift, Esq. Judge Peck was a prominent man in our county, a commissioner in the years 1839 to 1842. J. B. Schennerhorn was also a county commissioner in the years 1848 and 9.

It is generally supposed that Troy was first settled by the Irish, in canal times, but such was not the fact. A little north of Channahon, on the DuPage, in the present town of Troy, Jedediah Woolley, Jr., settled in 1831, and commenced building a mill, which, owing

to the war, was not completed until 1833. Two men of the name of Rexford, also settled in that locality, and rented Woolley's mill. John Van Riper and sons, and a Mr. Fleming and Carey Thornton, were early settlers in this vicinity.

Just west of the Joliet Mound, Andrew and Marshall King settled in 1833 or 4. Edward and Ephraim Perkins settled in Five Mile Grove, in 1833. Joseph Lawton and Samuel Holcomb at Twelve Mile Grove, in 1832.

On Forked Creek, in territory which would now be included in the towns of Florence, Wesley and Wilmington, John Frazier, Hamilton Keeney, John Williams, Robert Kilpatrick, James Kelly, James Jordan, John Howel and George Beckwith, settled in 1834, and Joseph Hadsall and William Goodwin in 1835.

There were also settlements farther up the Kankakee river, but as they are not included in the present limits of the county, we make no record of them, although one of our first county commissioners, Thomas Durham, was from Bourbonnais' Grove.

After the breaking out of what is known as the Black Hawk War, in the spring of 1832, there was great alarm felt by the settlers in this region. Although the seat of war was to the west and north, on Rock river, and although the Indians in this immediate vicinity claimed to be friendly, or neutral, yet none could tell how soon the war whoop would be heard on the Dupage and the Des Plaine, or how much dependence could be placed upon Pottawattamie friendship. That their fears were not without reason, appears from the massacre on Indian Creek, about fifteen miles above Ottawa, on the 21st of May, where the settlers belonging to three families, to the number of fifteen, men, women and children, were suddenly assailed by a band of Sacs, and butchered with all the usual barbarities of Indian warfare. One boy escaped and carried the news to Ottawa; and two girls, named Sylva and Rachael Hall, fifteen and seventeen years of age, were carried off and held for ransom. As we shall see, by and by, the history of Joliet is closely connected with this event.

The settlers at Walker's Grove, with some who had fled from Fox River, to the number of one hundred and twenty-five, col-

lected at the house of "Father Beggs," on section 16, which seemed most favorably located for defence, and this they fortified by pulling down the log sheds and stables, and forming a barricade with the logs. They chose James Walker captain, and resolved upon a vigorous defence. They collected all the weapons which could be of use, such as hoes, forks, axes and guns, and melted their pewter spoons and plates into bullets. After a while, they concluded that as they had but four available guns, the better part of valor was discretion, and they withdrew to Chicago for a while, where, from the over-crowded state of the fort, they suffered nearly as much as from their fears of the Indians. The settlers in Yankee Settlement, and other localities, also fled to Chicago for protection. The alarm was given to the settlers here by Hiram Pearson, of Chicago, and Dan'l Mack, of Hadley, who had started for Danville, and met refugees from the west, near the Des Plaine river. They returned at once and gave the alarm, and the families were gathered together and went to Chicago. While there, they organized a company of twenty-five, and chose Holder Sisson, from the Yankee settlement, captain. This company went out on a scout, to ascertain whether there were any Indians in the vicinity. They stayed the first night at Lawton's, on the Des Plaines; went thence to Naperville and Walker's Grove, stopping the second night at Fort Beggs. They proceeded to Holdeman's Grove, where they met a company from Ottawa, and with them went to the scene of the massacre on Indian Creek, where they found and buried the mutilated bodies, fifteen in number, including six children. They then went to Ottawa, where they found the remains of a regiment which had retreated from the affair at Stillman's Run. They then returned over the same route to Chicago. On their return they found the body of a Mr. Payne, a Dunkard preacher, who had been murdered by the Indians—his long beard being no protection.

After a few weeks, the settlers from Yankee Settlement returned, and built a fort on the Sisson or Hanford place; and also most of those from Walker's Grove returned to Fort Beggs.

When Scott arrived at Chicago, bringing the cholera with him—a foe more dreaded then than even the savage Indian—there was almost as great a stampede from Chicago to the country, as there

had been from the country to Chicago. Lanfear and his ox team, with others, were pressed into the government service by Scott, to take his "impedimenta" to Galena. At this time there was a Pottawattamie encampment between Fraction Run and Big Run, in Lockport, and remained for two or more years.

The settlers on Hickory Creek, in Jackson's Grove and neighboring localities, and this township, being from Indiana, naturally sought safety by flight in that direction. Hearing that the Indians were at Walker's Grove, they got their teams ready, and their families, and sent one of the Normans, in the meantime, to reconnoitre. He saw some Indians on the prairie near the Lillycash, and returned at once and gave the alarm. It was afterwards ascertained that they were friendly Pottawattamies, coming to assure the settlers that there was no danger. But the settlers commenced at once to flee toward the Kankakee.

When gathered together on the prairie there were about seventy in number, and about twenty teams, mostly drawn by oxen. Some of the men also formed a guard on horseback. Some ludicrous accounts are given of the coolness and presence of mind displayed by the fugitives. It is related of one from Jackson's Grove, that in his haste and confusion he mounted his horse facing the wrong way, and his horse being as badly frightened as the rider, he could get no chance to change front until he reached the Kankakee; and also that he had loaded his horse with supplies of bacon, flour and sugar, which he threw overboard, one after the other, to increase his speed, and was pulling off his coat when his flight was arrested. This story is, I presume, *somewhat* exaggerated, but if true, he could at least claim the *merit of facing the enemy!*

These fugitives met a company of armed men from Indiana, who had come out to aid in protecting the settlers, and some returned with them. It was this company which built the fort, known in early days as "Fort Nonsense," which used to stand on the spot now occupied by the residence of H. N. Marsh, Esq. I have this statement from Mr. Jesse Cook, who was one of the company that returned, and assisted in building the fort. Mr. Cook also states, that they found on their return to their homes, that the friendly

Pottawattamies had taken care of the chickens and pigs which they left on their flight—such good care that they never saw them again! Robert Stevens and David Maggard also returned, and concealed themselves for a while in a cave, a little above town. Most of the families returned in the fall and ensuing spring.

I have now given the names of those who can be considered “first settlers” in Will county, as now bounded, so far as I have been able to gather them. The rush of immigration in 1835-6, was too great to attempt any record of those years. We will come now to the history of the first settlement of this city.

In 1833, Charles Reed, who has been mentioned as one of the first settlers at Reed’s Grove, made a claim on the southeast quarter of section nine, town thirty-five, north range ten, east, and built a log house on the same, just below where the National Hotel now stands. He also commenced building a dam, and making preparations for a mill. It was his design to start his mill on the Housier, or Norman plan; putting his wheel in the race, depending on the current for power to drive the machinery. In March, 1834, James McKee, a Kentuckian, from Jacksonville, bought out the claim and improvements of Reed, for the sum of \$1,960, “which improvements,” says the original document, now in my possession, “consists of a dam partly made, on the east side of the river, a house, some fence, a mill race, and some machinery for a mill, both of wood and iron, on the west side of the river.”

McKee proceeded at once to the erection of a mill on an improved scale, and in the fall of 1834, got help enough together to raise, in two days, the heavy oak frame, which still stands just above and between the bridges, (one story of it now under water), and is used by Charles Ward for storing sash, doors, etc. I had the honor of assisting at this raising, and remember it took some tall lifting!

McKee was provided with a state “float,” which he laid on the quarter section, and thus secured the title to the land. This “float,” as it was called, was obtained in this way: At the time of the attack on Indian Creek, to which allusion has been made, all except two girls, of the name of Hall were killed, to the num-

ber of fifteen, as I have already stated. These two girls, named Sylvia and Rachael, and of the ages of fifteen and seventeen, were carried off by the Indians and held for ransom, which was effected after a while through the agency of a Winnebago Chief. The legislature of the state, being no doubt composed of very gallant and sympathetic men, donated to each of these girls eighty acres of the canal lands. McKee bought the grant to Sylvia of her husband, William S. Horne, who, it seems, had married her. The patent from the state is to Horne and his wife Sylvia, and they conveyed to McKee, December 18th, 1833. To this deed Sylvia makes her mark, from which we conclude that the schoolmaster had not made his appearance at Indian Creek in 1832, and that she married (as girls sometimes will) before she had completed her education. It is the general impression that James B. Campbell bought the float of the other Hall girl, and that he laid it upon the other quarter on the east side. But this I think is a myth, as the patent is direct from the state to Campbell, and for the consideration of one hundred dollars. Campbell was the treasurer of the board of canal commissioners, appointed under the act of 1829, and probably got his title under that act. Campbell laid his quarter off into town lots—the original town of Joliet—in 1834, and held a public sale of the same on the 18th and 19th days of June. Campbell was from Ottawa, and was never a resident of Joliet, he has recently deceased, leaving, it is said, a widow, who by the efforts of her attorneys, is disturbing the slumbers of some of our property owners. At this sale the lots brought from nineteen to one hundred and eight dollars. The lots on Jefferson street generally brought about fifty dollars. This seems low now, but *then* Jefferson street had no grand sewer!

Campbell named his town "*Juliet*," being more desirous to perpetuate the name of his daughter than that of the French explorer, and by this name our city was known until changed by an act of the legislature in 1845. There are still many who do not seem to know the origin of the name, or how to spell or pronounce it. Many spell it with two 'l's,' two 't's,' and a terminal 'e,'—a great waste of the alphabet—and it is pronounced Jolly-ette.

I presume because we are supposed to get our name from the "jolly" character of the inhabitants.

Early in March, 1834, Dr. A. W. Bowen, from Herkimer co., N. Y., came to this vicinity, and boarded for a time with Lewis Kercheval, made a claim on the Luther Woodruff place, and in May built a small house on the edge of the slough near where the Union School House stands, which he occupied soon after, on the arrival of Mrs. Bowen. Dr. Bowen subsequently, in 1835 and 1836, added East Joliet and Bowen's addition to the town plat. Dr. Bowen was for many years one of our most enterprising and respected citizens, but has now for some years resided in Wilmington.

In the fall of 1833, Charles Clement left New Hampshire and came west, through Michigan, following the Sac trail from Niles through northern Indiana and Illinois, crossed this river at the upper ford, and passed on to the Dupage, and down to Peoria. At this time this spot had attracted no attention, and he saw nothing except the log house of Maggard, of which I have spoken. Returning again in the spring of 1834, by way of Walker's Grove, he there heard of this point, and that a town was to be built here. He came over and found McKee on the ground, engaged in his mill enterprise. Thinking that perhaps something might come of it, he made a purchase of one acre, lying west of the proposed mill yard, for \$125. I believe he has never regretted the investment. He proceeded to build a house on the spot where Bush's block now stands, and which afterwards, with some additions, became the famous "American Hotel." His brother, Daniel Clement, and his wife, and a Mr. Clark, joined him in May, and they took possession of the house. Mr. Charles Clement now enjoys the honor of being the "oldest inhabitant," and that is better than to be Mayor! I have received much assistance from him in making up these reminiscences, and if there is anything in them that you don't like—lay it to him!

In June, of the same year, M. H. Demmond, from Herkimer county, N. Y., in company with George R. Makepeace, on an ex-

ploring tour, came down from Chicago, and were so well pleased with the prospect of Mc'Kee's town, that each purchased one of his acres for \$125. They returned to New York, settled up their business, and with their families came hither in the latter part of September. Miss Murray, a sister of Mrs. Demmond, now Mrs. Folts, a young man by the name of Jenney, and myself, accompanied them. The journey occupied us two weeks. From Detroit we came through to Niles by stage—a rough and tedious experience, the roads being through a new and heavily timbered and swampy country, were bad enough. At Niles we hired teams to bring us through to "Juliet." As we came on, the roads grew much better, as the character of the country grew more rolling. But there was but little settlement, and the cabins grew less frequent as we came west, and the road became a mere trail. But we were in no danger of losing our way, for we followed near the famous "Sauk trail." We were now confined by no artificial metes or bounds—

"For here the fair savannas know  
    No barriers in the bloomy grass,  
Wherever breeze of Heaven may blow,  
    Or beam of Heaven may glance, we pass.."

At long intervals the smoke of a pioneer's cabin under the lee of some sheltering grove, gave indication of human settlement. It was a lonesome and yet a delightful ride, for the weather was fine, and everything was a new experience. The prairies, unlike the level monotony of those we had passed in Michigan, remind us of the description of our own Bryant, as they

"Stretch in airy undulations far away,  
As if the Ocean, in his gentlest swell,  
    Stood still, with all his rounded billows fixed  
And motionless, forever."

The groves, unlike the dense and swampy forests we had toiled through, look more like the parks and orchards of some old and cultivated land, while at every step flowers strange and beautiful, greet the eye. The prairie-hen starts up from the grass, and from the oak openings the antlered deer gazes at us with more of won-

der than of fear. A strange haze mellows the rays of the cloudless sun, and gentle breezes, untainted by the breath of city or hamlet, regale us with the perfume of unshorn fields and countless flowers.

As we come on toward "Juliet," we see now and then a log cabin in the edges of the Hickory timber; pass Van Horne's point, and the cabin of "Uncle Billy" Gougar, and cross Hickory at Sayer & Wheeler's mill. On we press, eager for the first glimpse of that "town" of which we have heard so much. We come out upon the open valley, through the tall grass of the Spring Creek bottoms. We reach the first house, on the edge of a formidable looking slough. This is the palatial residence of Dr. Bowen, of which we have spoken, at least fourteen feet square. But this is, *then*, but the suburbs of the great city, and we cross the boggy slough, full of rank grass and weeds, and press on. We come into the region of upper Chicago street, and there *two* mansions greet the sight. They are those of Thomas Cox and Benj. F. Barker. They are not equal to Dr. Raynor's, but then they are human habitations, and the sight is welcome. We pass on. Coming to the corner north of the Central Church, we find another building in process of erection, which afterwards became the famous "Juliet Hotel." A little farther is another house, on the lot now occupied by Mrs. Kinney, built by the brothers Bailey, in which Campbell had held his sale.

Such was the town on the east side of the river. Four new but unpretending houses, standing all out doors—not a fence, or enclosure of any kind, on a rough and rocky bottom, only here and there a scrub oak to relieve the desolation. But we are headed for McKee's town, and we pass on in search of the Des Plaines river, upon the west side of which, we have heard, it is located. Soon we come upon it, a very tame and modest stream,—it seems in the dry September, such as we had been used to call a "creek,"—and we cross it at a ford just below an island, without the slightest apprehension of drowning. Coming out and up the western bank, we see some men at work on a dam, other men digging a race, and

some hewing timber. We find the log house built by Reed, where we are welcomed with true Kentucky hospitality, by James McKee and his wife Sally. Just below the house is a little enclosure, which we take to be a garden, although we find it called a "truck patch," through which flows a little brook from a beautiful and abundant spring, welling up under a rocky and beetling bluff. This spring is now changed into a well, some six or eight feet below the present surface, and its water is dispensed by a vulgar pump; all its beauty is gone, but not its usefulness, as it still continues to supply "Adam's Ale" freely, to all. Happy those who are content with its healthful refreshment, rejecting all human substitutes in its vicinity, or elsewhere! A little to the north we find the house built by Clement, where we find the hands at work on the mill are boarding, and where we, too, find a temporary home. Among these boarders was Richard Hobbs, familiarly known as "Uncle Dick," and who will be well remembered by many, and whose sons perpetuate his name among us. A little north is another building, which has been erected for Mr. Demmond, in part of which the family is to live, and in part of which a store is to be opened, with the goods on their way around the lakes. A little way above the middle bridge we also find a log house, just erected by a Mr. Campbell, who sold out the next summer to Barton Smith.

These are all the indications of the future city on the west side. We climb up the bluff by way of a gully, which is now Cross street, and find still to the west another bluff, which is heavily wooded. On the highest part of the first bluff we find the fort and palisades, of which mention has been made, and this is the first intimation we have had that Juliet is a fortified city. A little to the north of this, the bluff is interrupted by a deep woody ravine, (the present location of Spring street), which is the outlet to a large swamp covering the area between Hickory street and the west bluff, and extending up as far as the present breweries. The log cabin of Mr. Maggard is so far to the north that we cannot see it.

Such was Joliet as we then saw it, on a late September day in the

year 1834. I sat down upon the brow of the bluff, and "viewed the landscape o'er." I confess that I felt a choking sensation in my esophagus! You will not wonder that to a boy just from home, and from an old, cultivated and populous village, the prospect of passing the winter in such a locality, was anything but cheering. To my eyes, which had not been touched by that prophetic vision which only an investment of dollars can give, the future city—then predicted, now, happily, partially realized—was not discernable, and an opportunity to return would have been gratefully accepted. In which case, Juliet would have lost one of its tallest citizens, and you would have escaped the present infliction.

In the course of the fall the mill is erected, and also a saw mill is built and run by Clement and Clark, and a brisk lumber trade is created, for the logs are near by, and "Uncle Sam" does not keep watch. Mr. Demmond opens his store, and we take a position as clerk, and make the acquaintance of the people. These we find to be of two kinds, Yankees and Hoosiers. All who came from any state east of Ohio, are called *Yankees*; and all who are of western or southern origin, and who wear "jeans" clothing, and use such phrases as "right smart chance," "powerful weak," "ornery," "heap," etc., and to every question or remark, answer "which," are called *Hoosiers*.

During the winter, Mr. Demmond bought out McKee's quarter section, except the portions already sold, and the mill and mill yard, and immediately surveyed and recorded "West Juliet."

According to the best of my recollection, refreshed by Dr. Bowen and Mr. Clement, the number of those who passed the winter of 1834-5, within the present city limits, was less than fifty. I give the names as far as I am able.

A. W. Bowen and wife, Charles Clement, Daniel Clement and wife, Thomas H. Blackburn and wife, Thomas Cox and wife, O. D. Putnam, Henry Bone and wife, two brothers Baily, Asaph Webster and wife, Harlow Webster, George West and wife, N. H. Cutter, James McKee and wife, Richard Hobbs, Chas. W. Brandon, M. H. Demmond and wife, Miss Murray, Mr. Campbell and wife, Jay Lyons, Eri Dodge and wife, N. H. Clark, D. Maggard,

Edw. Perkins, Jas. C. Troutman, a family named Lumereaux, and last, but *not least*, G. H. Woodruff. These, and their families, are all that I can now recall. (Mr. Makepeace and his wife had gone on to Fox river). Rev. J. H. Prentiss, under the auspices of the Am. Home Mission Society, visited Juliet during the winter, and finding that there were even then heathen enough to justify the step, came on the next summer with his family, and established preaching, and soon after organized a Presbyterian church—sometime in 1835. George West, named in the above list, was a Methodist local preacher, and probably preached the first sermon in Juliet. But the first organized religious society was, I think, "Christ Church," Episcopal, which was organized by Bishop Chase, the 16th day of May, 1835. Comstock Hanford, John Griswold, Miles Rice, Orlen Westover, A. W. Bowen, Julia Ann Hanford, Amorette B. Griswold, being the original members, all of whom, except Dr. Bowen and wife, resided in the adjacent country.

Some here will remember a little stone building on the lot now owned by Mr. Plant, on Broadway, and used as a stable. It was pulled down within a year or two. It was in this building that Mr. Prentiss preached for a while, until the first school house was built, which is still standing on Hickory street, west of the Catholic church, now occupied as a residence by Mr. Terrill. This house was built by Demmond, McKee, Beaumont, and some others, and was used for school and church purposes.

The first teacher in this school house was John Watkins, who had previously taught in Chicago. He is still living in New Lenox, nearly blind. He was not, however, *the first* teacher in either place. Mrs. Kinzie tells of one earlier than him in Chicago, and the first attempt at a school in Joliet was made by Miss Persis Cleveland, now of California, in the old log fort, of which I have spoken.

The Rev. S. R. Beggs, in 1836, was appointed to the Joliet Circuit, and commenced the work of building the first Methodist church, which was also the first church edifice in Joliet, in 1837. This building is now the blacksmith's shop of Rock Island Railroad; and in this year, 1837, the Methodist church of Joliet became an organized legal body.

The season of 1835 made considerable additions to the embryo city. Among them were John L. and Richard L. Wilson, George Higley and family, Levi Jenks and family, Archibald Crowl, Wm. Walters, O. F. Rogers, Rev. J. H. Prentis and family, Abel Gilbert, George Squire and wife, Rodney House and family, William A. Chatfield and family, S. W. Bowen, C. C. Pepper, Abijah Cagwin and family, a Mr. Boland and his two sons, Abner and Andrew, H. N. Marsh and wife, Elias Haven and sons, David Rattray, James Brodie, Francis Nicholson and wife, W. R. Atwell and wife, Allen Pratt, Dr. Curtis Haven, Barton Smith and two sons and family, Joel George and wife, Sullivan Demmond, Jonathan Barnett, Charles Sayer, J. Beaumont and family, E. M. Daggett, E. C. Fellows, Fenner Aldrich, George Howliston, Asa Rowe, Elias Hyde, Dr. Daniel Reed, William Sheriff, S. B. Hopkins, Walter Seeley, Edson White, O. W. Stillman and John M. Wilson. Several buildings were erected on each side of the river during this year, but the exact number cannot be told. Many of the new comers lived for a time in "shanties;" Rev. Mr. Prentiss had one on Oneida street, under the bluff.

I will say a few words here, by way of explanation of what I said above in reference to the lumber trade; and also explanatory of several other matters to which I shall refer in the course of this lecture.

In the first settlement of this county, the title to the land was in the United States, except that which had been granted to the state for canal purposes; and also, except every sixteenth section in each township, which had been given to the state for school purposes. To encourage settlement, persons were allowed to locate on any lands not already occupied, to make a claim, and on building a cabin and enclosing and cultivating a few acres, they established a "pre-emption right," that is, a right to purchase the land in preference to all others, at one dollar and a quarter per acre, whenever the same should come into market. Settlers were, of course, allowed to make use of timber for building their cabins and making their fences. This indulgence on the part of the government was grossly abused. Every one in those days regarded the timber as free plunder, and only took care not to trespass upon

a settler's claim. To steal from "Uncle Sam," was regarded then (as I fear it still is) as a very venial sin. Persons who had no claim as settlers, cut down the timber and hauled it to the mills, and had it manufactured into lumber for sale. Nor did they confine themselves to United States' lands, but canal lands and school sections were also subject to depredation. The bluffs about our city, and also the groves, all over the county, were then covered with a heavy growth of full grown timber, mostly oak and black walnut. These were, to a great extent, sacrificed to the greed of the trespassers, and manufactured into lumber and sold at ten dollars per thousand. Great, splendid black walnut trees, the lumber from which would now bring one hundred dollars per thousand, were cut down and made into common lumber. The saw mills were kept running night and day, and Sundays too. All the woods which we now see, are of a subsequent growth. Almost all the buildings erected previous to the opening of the canal, were made of this hard wood lumber. You have noticed that when one of these takes fire, it is long enough in burning to accommodate the fire department.

At the time of the land sale, in the summer of 1835, many of the settlers were unprepared to pay for their land, even at the low price asked by the government. But there were many speculators here from the east, who were anxious to invest in land. They dare not, however, bid against a "settler," even though he might not have established a pre-emption right; for the settlers had organized a kind of court to decide on all settlers' claims, and they were bound to protect each other against not only Uncle Sam, but "the rest of mankind." The lands were worth more than double the government price, and hence compromises were effected between the settler and the speculator, by which the speculator supplied the money to buy the land, and the settler gave him one half. Thus the settler got a reasonable amount of land for nothing. In consideration of the grants made to the state of lands for school and seminary purposes, and a per cent. upon all sales, these lands were exempted by the state from taxation for five years after sale.

As a matter of course, for the first few years, we were mainly dependant upon older settlements for our supplies. These were brought mostly from the "Wabash." This region, somewhat inde-

finite perhaps, was a kind of nursing mother to the northern part of our state. Flour, bacon, corn meal, dried fruit and whitewood siding, were the principal articles of commerce. These were transported in those curious and capacious old wagons, which originated, I believe, in Pennsylvania, but which we used to call "Hoosier wagons," or "Prairie schooners," and which, with their canvas covers and long ox teams, traveling in company, reminded one of the caravans of the east, as they slowly moved over the unobstructed prairie. A curious specimen of humanity, too, was the driver, armed with his long whip, which he cracked with a noise like the report of a pistol, as he sat perched up in the bow of his schooner, or plodded his way beside his cattle, clad in butternut jeans, his face, hands and feet about the same color as his "bacon."

This "bacon," by the way, was a curious product. It consisted of the "sides" of the hog, with the ribs removed and cured by salt, in stacks, then smoked a little, and was handled loose and unprotected by any kind of package or cover. It thus became exposed in summer to the flies, and was often well stocked with maggots. In this state it was not particularly relished by Yankees, and before offering it for sale, it is said to have been the custom to stop outside of town and subject it to the action of smoke, with sufficient heat to cause a stampede of the maggots. I suppose after a week or two at Andersonville or Libby, one would not be so fastidious!

The Hoosier and his team traveled in entire independence of taverns. His capacious wagon carried his supplies for the journey. His wants were simple. Corn meal and bacon, coffee and tobacco, and most likely some whisky, formed the "common doings" with which he was content. And for his cattle he carried some corn, and allowed them to feed upon the rich herbage of the prairie night and morning. Camping by a spring or brook near the timber, he made his coffee with water from the spring, and toasted his bacon by a fire of faggots gathered from the woods, and now and then, when these were hard to find, a rail or two from the settler's fence. He slept at night under his canvas cover, secure from rain and dew.

The years 1835 and 1836 were characterized by a rush of immigration, and a rage for land speculation all over the west. The

land sale at Chicago in June, 1835, brought many into the county eager to invest in lands and city lots, and in 1836, the fever reached its acme. We have had many epidemics since, such as the gold fever, the oil fever, the super-heated steam fever, and the fever and ague; but I think none have equaled in intensity and universality the land fever of 1836. Everybody was eager to invest in lands and city lots. Many were the cities located, projected, and most beautifully platted, with liberal appropriations for public squares, churches and academies; and these were taken to eastern cities for the benefit of those who could not come west, and there sold. Indeed, town lots may be said to have been the only export from the west. We imported our flour and bacon, as at that time sufficient was not raised for the wants of the settlers and visitors. I presume that many here present are not aware of the fact, that Will county is dotted with the ruins of great cities. Yet such is the case. Palmyra, Williamsburg, Middletown, Vienna, Carlyle, West Lockport, New Rochester, Buffalo, Lunenbergh, etc., etc.; these are the names of some of these cities, which flourished in imagination and on paper, but they have passed away, leaving no vestige except upon the county records, and in the memory of their victims.

But there was also another famous city, just over the line in another county, of which a little Dutchman, Johnny Beard, was the proprietor. Johnny thought this was to be "one very great city." He made a splendid looking one on paper, with the great Kankakee coming down from the east, and the Des Plaine and Du Page united from the north, the "city of Kankakee" reposing in native beauty at the junction. Johnny used often to come up with his wife in a little old "coachee," and was always full of his "city." He used to squeeze in a little whisky, too; but the old horses and coachee used to take him safe home, whether he could drive or not. He built a dam across the Des Plaine, a little above its junction with the Kankakee, (which forms the Illinois), and commenced building a mill. But the next spring the Kankakee, which drains a great extent of country far to the east in Indiana, got on a rampage long before the Des Plaine, which rises much farther in the north, and coming down with its great volume of

water and ice, dammed up the Des Plaines—turned its current northward, and sent Johnny Beard's dam, city, mill and all, a kiting up to Treat's Island, where it deposited the fragments. This was the last we heard of "Kankakee city," until some of our citizens "struck ile" there a few years since, and sunk a well,—and sunk a little pile of money, too!

The additions to our population in 1836, became too many to attempt a full enumeration. Among these were: J. A. Matteson, Orange Chauncey, Albert Shepard, Uri Osgood, James Stout, Thomas, Edward and Bennett Allen, Mr. De Berard, John Currey, J. J. Garland, Dr. Comstock, Otis Hardy, Edmund Wilcox, Thomas R. Hunter, W. J. Heath, David Richards, Hugh Henderson, J. C. Newkirk, Hervey Lowe, Richard Doolittle, William Blair, Rufus Colton, Elnathan Bassett, William A. Boardman, Stephen Hubbard, Dr. Scholfield, William G. Hubbard, Dr. Little, Henry Fish, M. Worthingham, David L. Roberts, Isaac H. Palmer, E. E. Bush, Dr. Simon Z. Havens, Theo. Woodruff. We attempt to give only a few prominent well-known names.

Building was prosecuted rapidly during this year. Of the names given in the preceding lists, some are still citizens of Joliet. Many have passed away from earth; some have found homes elsewhere. Thomas Cox laid out the town of Winchester, (now Wilmington,) and built a mill there. McKee initiated the town of Pontiac, by building a mill on the Vermillion. M. Worthingham is the *Lieut.* Worthingham who fills a soldier's grave in Oakwood, having been killed at the battle of Stone River. Allen Pratt was for many years one of our most active men, built a considerable number of buildings, but has been dead for some years. John M. Wilson is the well-known and honored Judge Wilson of Chicago, and the proprietor of the Joliet Mound Tile Manufactory. Some, such as William Blair and Thomas Allen, were afterwards, when hard times came on, seduced away by Chicago, and—poor fellows, they deserved a better fate—got rich!

I see I have omitted one prominent name from the list of 1836, and I will introduce it by a little story. It was sometime in this year that I received from the post office a letter, directed to George Woodruff. The address was wanting one initial letter, and it was

in a delicate chirography, but I did not for a moment doubt that it had reached its proper destination, and I opened it and began to read. It began, "Dearest George,"—this was just what I had long wanted her to say!—and it proceeded in a very tender and affectionate style. *I liked it*, so I read on until it seemed to imply some things that I had not been guilty of, so I turned to look at the signature. Now, I am not going to tell what this was—as I don't know but it might make trouble even at this late day—but it was not the name of the girl I left behind me, and so, *very reluctantly*, I returned the letter to the post office, when I learned that there was "another Richmond in the field," to maintain the honor of the name, and to become the banker of the family!

To relieve the tedium of the winter of 1834-5, I made my first visit to Chicago. My old friend Risley, of Channahon, was going up, and I took passage. Many here will remember him as the second sheriff of the county. He has now been dead several years, but when living he used often to tell the story of that ride. It was a cold day in January—cheerless was the way and rough the road. We filled the wagon with straw, and Mrs. Demmond, having a tender regard for our "creetur comfort," gave us a little bag of doe-nuts to beguile the way. Risley, when he told the story, used to aver that there was a pillow-case full, but I think this was a slight exaggeration. Well, the wind was cold and I was unused to the exposure, so I soon got down into the straw, along side the bag of doe-nuts. After a while I asked Risley if he did not want a doe-nut, to which he replied in the negative. This question was repeated several times as we rode along, and always received the same reply. Of course, after a while I ceased to press the matter. After riding along in silence some time longer, Risley himself began to feel an aching void under his vest, and he says, "I don't care, George, if I do try some of those doe-nuts." "*You spoke too late*," was the mildest way in which I could break to him the fact that the bag was empty! The moral of this story is: Take your doe-nuts when you can get them, especially if you are in "cahoot" with a hungry boy!

In due time we arrived at Chicago. The last nine miles of the road was splendid. In those days, the prairie from the

Chicago river out to the Des Plaines was covered in the fall with water, which, freezing up, made a fine road-way in the winter. We stopped at the "Saug-a-nash," the crack hotel of those days. It was part frame and part logs, and stood at the forks of the river, on the spot where the wig-wam in which Lincoln was nominated for president, was afterwards built. Upon the west side, close to the river, there were two or three buildings, and from the Saug-a-nash down to the few stores and houses on Lake and Water streets, was a long stretch of prairie,—while the old log fort, "Dearborn," its offices and palisades, brilliant in whitewash, was the most conspicuous object in all that vast area now covered with marble palaces. I suppose the population of Chicago was then less than two thousand. I called at the office of Collins & Caton, where I found an old college friend, and made the acquaintance of that law firm, so well known subsequently. I well remember the appearance of Judge Caton—not then Chief Justice, but at the other end of the judicial ladder, being a justice of the peace. He was a good specimen of the "style" of that day,—broadcloth pants, tucked into the tops of "stoga" boots, satin vest, plug hat, ruffle shirt, and over all the blanket coat, then so universally worn by all classes. The "stoga" boots were a necessity in those days, as in no other rig could the streets of Chicago be navigated. But I have got away from my subject, and yet not altogether, for Chicago was as much a suburb of Joliet *then as now.*

During this first winter of 1834-5, we were obliged to go to "Uncle Billy Gougar's," a little way above the red mill, to get our mail, and a letter then cost us twenty-five cents. This was the nearest post office, and was on the route of a weekly horse-back mail from Danville to Chicago. C. C. Vanhorne was the postmaster, but the office was kept by one of the Gougar boys. I am not able to state what was the revenue of this office, but I know that the box rent was not much, as the entire office was but one old dry goods' box, divided off into a few pigeon holes. I wish I had the pencil of a Nast, that I could here illustrate this production with the picture of a young man I remember, astride an Indian pony, with his long legs drawn up behind him to keep them out of

the wet grass or snow, eagerly taking his way every Saturday to "Uncle Billy's" for the anxiously expected letter. I should like to catch the look of eager expectation on his arrival, or the satisfied expression of his phiz as he reads the letter for the twentieth time, slowly riding home; or the downcast, disconsolate air with which he turned about when the postmaster told him there was nothing. Oh, fathers and mothers! don't forget to send promptly the desired letter to your absent boy! Young woman, do not let any other engagement interfere with the duty of writing to the absent lover—and don't be backward about calling him "Dearest George," or John, as the case may be! Be as *gushing* as you feel! he can stand it!

In February, 1835, Dr. A. W. Bowen obtained an appointment as postmaster for Juliet, and a post office was soon after opened, and we got our mail by a cross route from Plainfield, connecting with the stage route from Ottawa to Chicago. For a while in 1836, there was some trouble about the mail arrangements, and Dr. Bowen used to commission any reliable person who happened to be going to Plainfield, to bring over the mail. On one occasion Charley Sayer had been over after the mail, and returning just at night found the office closed, the doctor having gone to supper. Charley had of course been solemnly sworn safely to keep and deliver the mail, and he stood upon the doorsteps of the office in a quandary what to do. Just then a newly arrived lawyer passed by, and Charley told him his trouble, and asked the lawyer what he would advise him to do. The lawyer pondered a moment to give his opinion due weight, and then told him to take the mail bag home with him, get his own supper, and return with it, by which time the doctor would undoubtedly have returned, and he could relieve himself of his responsibility. Charley concluded to do so, and was about starting off, as was the lawyer, when it occurred to him that he had been taking legal advice, and so, with something of an air, he put his hand into his pocket and asked, "How much is your charge, Mr. O.?" Now, Mr. O. was then a young lawyer, and not so celebrated as he afterwards became, but I never heard of any lawyer, old or young, so green as not to be ready with a reply to such a question, and he promptly replied, "Five

dollars." Charley hardly knew whether he was in earnest or not, but he handed over a "V" to Mr. O., who coolly placed the same in his pocket, and bade him good evening. "What! what!" says Charley, "you don't mean to keep that five dollars, do you?" "Certainly, certainly," was the reply, "you don't expect *legal advice* for nothing, do you?" Charley went home crest-fallen, mad at Mr. O., mad at the postoffice department, and above all, mad at himself; and the more he thought about it the madder he got, and the story getting out, and the boys laughing at him, he got so mad that he went off and sued Mr. O. for the recovery of the five dollars. Of course he lost his suit, and another five dollars went for costs.

Now this story has two great moral lessons; one is, if you put money into a lawyer's hands, *don't think it a joke!* and the other is, never sue a *lawyer*, for, like throwing fire at the *devil*, it won't scare much!

During the summer of 1835, Mr. Demmond built the old stone block opposite the National. This was quite an event, and it was duly celebrated by a ball in the upper story. Plainfield, Yankee Settlement, Channahon and Hickory Creek, were canvassed for girls, and though you might not think it, our fellow-citizen, Chas. Clement, was particularly keen and active on the scent!

The next stone building was that of the Wilson's, south of the City Hall, which was built in 1836, and the stone block known as "Merchants' Row," was built in 1837. This, and the wooden block opposite, (which was burned in the late fire), was the centre of business on the west side, while the two wooden blocks on upper Chicago street were the centre of business on the east side, and all were at one time filled with stores of the various kind.

During this summer of 1835, occurred the first 4th of July celebration in Joliet, which was quite an affair. O. W. Stillman and Dick Wilson were prime movers, and they got together quite a crowd from the surrounding country. We had all the usual programme. Noise, music, procession, marshal, chaplain, reader, oration, dinner, toasts and champaigne—no essential was omitted. Rev. J. H. Prentiss was chaplain; Jonathan Barnett, equipped with Major Cook's sash and sword, and mounted on a gray horse, cav-

orted as marshal, to the admiration of the natives. The exercises were held in a little cluster of scrub oaks, somewhere near the St. Louis Round House. Dr. Bowen read the Declaration, and a young man who had lately rubbed through college, and who was supposed to have the necessary spread-eagle eloquence, was selected to deliver the oration. I am sorry, on your account, that there is no record of this oration. It ought to have been preserved, and to have gone down to posterity bound up with those of Webster and Adams. But we had no reporter to embalm it. You may believe, however, that it did ample justice to the Pilgrim Fathers, and the heroes of the revolution; drew lessons of warning and instruction from ancient Greece and Rome; deprecated the evil of party spirit; and, while ignoring the subject of domestic slavery, commiserated the down-trodden millions of Europe, and closed with visions, almost apocalyptic, of the future glory of this great republic. I remember with what rapt attention my Hoosier friend, Joe Shanks, listened; and how he inquired afterward if the speaker warn't a preacher! It detracts somewhat from this estimate of the impression it made, that my friend, Dr. Bowen, did not even remember who was the orator! But such is fame!

But a still more important event occurred on this same 4th of July, 1835. This was no less than the first wedding in Juliet, which must be recorded. You will remember Henry Bone and wife as among those who passed the winter of 1834-5 in Juliet. I shall have to disturb those Bones again. This man Bone is entitled to the questionable honor of opening the first doggery in town. Mrs. Bone was the daughter of the Mr. Pence I also named as one of the early settlers on Hickory. Mr. Pence, notwithstanding his name, was rich in the possession of another daughter—Ann Pence. And now comes the old, old story—ever fresh, and ever new! and always interesting, especially to the ladies, of the doings of the little god of the bow and arrow! But I am not going into the detail, and only say that one Thomas Ellis saw this sweet Anne Pence, loved, and told his love. And the sweet Anne Pence, she too, owned the soft impeachment, and in due time the all-important day was fixed, and came, as I have said, on this 4th of July, 1834. The event came off at the residence of the said

Henry Bone, who occupied a building on the northeast corner of Chicago and Benton streets, having his saloon in front and living in the rear. The officiating justice was B. F. Barker, Esq. The guests were A. W. Bowen and wife, Charles Sayer, James Draper and James *Smith*, (was there ever an occasion when some member of this family was not present!) and the wife and daughter of the officiating justice. And it is from this daughter that I have the details of this event. Of course, ladies will want to know how the bride was dressed. Thanks to the good memory of the lady I have mentioned, I am able to tell you. The bride was dressed in pink De Laine and white apron, calf-skin shoes and hose of her own manufacture; and for head dress, she wore a cap with a double ruffle all round, and I presume her own hair. The groom wore a full suit of Kentucky jeans. The wedding "de'jeuner" consisted of gingerbread, imported for the occasion, by ox-team express, from Chicago, and whisky sling, compounded by the skillful hands of the host. The hostess passed around the circle of guests with a card of gingerbread in each hand, and each one broke off as much as they pleased, and the host followed with two tin cups of sling, of which each one sipped as much as they pleased. The wedding tour consisted of a ride in a one-horse wagon to the plantation of Reason Zarley, Esq.

I presume the honey-moon was, in all essential particulars, much like other honey-moons, and passed as happily as if they had made the tour of Europe, or as if the wedding had been as magnificent as that of Boss Tweed's daughter, a few years ago. Indeed, at such times the parties, whether dressed in silks and broadcloth, or calico and homespun, are supposed to be equally indifferent to time and place and circumstance.

As somewhat *germane* to this matter, I would say, that I have made considerable enquiry in order to ascertain who was the first person born in Juliet. But I have found so many first ones, that I do not undertake to settle the question. My own impressions would be in favor of a McKee, as, according to my recollection, such an event was a yearly one at the McKee mansion. And it thus happened that the original mansion received numerous additions in the shape of lean-to's, made necessary by the fast growing

family, until it looked like a summer squash covered with warts. The boys used to say that they could tell when "coming events cast their shadows before," by seeing "Jimmy" at work on another "lean-to." But although we are not able to settle absolutely the question as to the priority of birth, this much has been shown by the inquiry: that such events did occur, even in those early days, and are no modern invention! And I would say, in passing, that the Hon. George C. McKee, representative in congress from Mississippi, is one of those McKee children, though I think born a little too late to be the "first-born" of Joliet. But we don't disown him because he is a congressman!

Perhaps I ought to notice here the first divorce which occurred in Will county. This occurred in 1837. Levi Button obtains a divorce from "Matilda Button," on the ground of desertion. This is all I know about the matter! Why Matilda deserted Levi I have not the slightest idea. Perhaps he had cold feet!—perhaps she had found an "affinity." Evidently these "Buttons" were not matched! And whether Levi ever got any one else to look after his buttons, I don't know. The only thing I do know further about the matter is, that it cost him only ten dollars to get the decree. Now, my good "Benedicts," don't make a rush for court; the price of this, as of all other luxuries, has greatly advanced!

During the winter of 1835-6, through the active efforts of Dr. Bowen and James Walker as lobbyists, the legislature passed an act organizing Will county, and locating the county seat at Juliet. An election was ordered for three county commissioners, a sheriff, coroner, and recorder. At a convention held in Demmond's stone block, without regard to party, Holden Sisson, Thomas Durham and James Walker, were nominated as commissioners; Robert Stevens for sheriff; E. M. Daggett, coroner; and Geo. H. Woodruff, recorder; and, although the ticket met with some opposition, it was handsomely elected. For these were the early—the better days—the golden age of Will county, when the *best* men were selected for office! Robert Stevens, however, declined to accept the office of sheriff, and Fenner Aldrich was chosen at the fall election.

I need hardly say, that the county commissioners' court an-

swered to our board of supervisors, doing the business of the county. They held their first meeting at the Juliet Hotel, then kept by William H. Blackburn, March 14th, 1836. They appointed Levi Jenks clerk and school commissioner, and Charles Clement treasurer of the county. They divided the county into twelve election precincts. They also fixed the price of tavern charges at six and a quarter cents for all liquid refreshments, and twenty-five cents for meals, and twelve and a half cents for lodgings. After finishing the county business, they voted themselves six dollars each for their four days of service. Certainly not a very big salary steal!

The county commissioners rented the second story of the Wilson's store for a court room, and here the county and circuit courts were held until the building of the first jail and court house.

I rode an Indian pony to Plainfield, and took the stage for Chicago, purchased a large sized ledger for a record book, and opened the recorder's office in the back end of Demmond's store, in the stone block which he had built, and which still remains, having somewhat of an ancient look.

It is probably well understood that a pretty sharp rivalry had, from the first, been kept up between the two sides of the river, and soon complaints were made that I was not keeping the office at the county seat. Such was indeed the fact. Demmond had recorded his plat as "West Juliet," and not as an addition, as he claimed that his town was the "true, original Jacobs," and he scorned the idea of being an "*addition*." So they had me, no mistake. But I was equal to the occasion. Anticipating Grant and Sherman, I made a "flank" movement, and moved down a few rods into a small frame building on the school section, which was surveyed and recorded in 1835 as an addition to Juliet, where I was joined by Levi Jenks, clerk, etc., and for a time at least, we were headquarters for Will county.

I have a few words more to say about this old Recorder's office. It was about sixteen feet square, and stood on the south side of Lafayette street, on the edge of what was then a rocky ravine, full of red cedars and other shrubs, vines and wild plants. It was the outlet for the water which accumulated on the low

ground on Centre street, known as "Comstock's Pond," and after heavy rains, had a very pretty cascade. All this has been obliterated by the march of improvement. We held the office there but a short time, while a better building was being put up a little north on Bluff street, by J. J. Garland. While we were there an amusing incident occurred. The office had one door in front, and two small windows, and one large window in the rear. Jenks had his desk by one of the front windows, and a lawyer, J. C. Newkirk, had a desk by the other. The recorder's desk stood in front of the back window.

I have mentioned Rev. J. H. Prentiss as the first minister who located in Joliet. He came here from Onondaga county, N. Y. He was an excellent man—a fair preacher, extremely diffident and modest, and easily embarrassed. He knew no more what to do with a joke, than a hen does with a hot potato. One Sunday he preached a sermon in the old school house on Hickory street, from the text, "Curse ye, curse ye Meroz," etc. The Dominie had been unusually eloquent and earnest, and closed up with an application of the passage to his audience, "Curse ye, curse ye *Juliet*," etc., etc. It so happened that the recorder had been to church on that day, and the next Monday, having got tired with writing, he took his favorite position, *i. e.*, turned his back to the door, lit his pipe, and put his feet out of the window. Suddenly the sermon he had heard came to mind, and he repeated the closing sentences, with the text as applied to "*Juliet*," in a loud voice, and imitating the style of the preacher. He did this for the edification of Jenks and Newkirk, who had not heard the sermon. He expected that his effort would meet with applause and a hearty "encore." But instead of that, there was a profound silence that seemed ominous of something. Surprised at this, he turned round to see what could be the matter, and there, in the door, stood Dominie Prentiss—the reddest faced, most embarrassed man you ever saw, unless we except Jenks, who had risen up and stood looking as though he wished the floor would open and let him out of sight, his big eyes looking like peeled onions,—while Newkirk, partly behind the door, was cramming his handkerchief into his mouth to prevent an explosion. Now, according to all rules of propriety,

the recorder should have been most embarrassed by the situation, but I think he was the least so, and relieved himself by saying: "Good morning, Mr. Prentiss, aren't you glad to find that one man at least, was impressed by your sermon?"

One great reason for this rivalry, aside from the diverse interests of the proprietors and speculators on either side, was the absence of bridges. Our modes of communication were very inconvenient, sometimes dangerous, and sometimes we had none at all. Sometimes we crossed in a "dug-out," or a "skiff," and sometimes we had a "ferry," sometimes a "ford," and sometimes a precarious "foot bridge." During this bridgeless era, which lasted until the incorporation of the town in 1837, many incidents occurred—some comic and some tragic. Some lost their property, some lost their lives, and many more lost their *temper*. Of the latter number was Thomas Allen, who was crossing on the mill pond in the ferry boat, which was pulled over by a rope strung from trees on either bank. The boat had already got loaded to its full capacity, and was about shoving off when two more jumped aboard, against the protestations of Allen and others, consequently they had gone but a little way when she dipped, and went down with all on board, who got a thorough wetting. Tom came out puffing and blowing, mad as a hornet, for he had on his "store" clothes, and turning to the party who was the cause of the catastrophe, and shaking his fist in his face, says, "I owe my *death* to you, sir!"

On another occasion John Ward, who will be remembered by some, for he has but lately passed away, undertook during a season of high water to make the passage of the ford. He had gone over on the west side in the morning without much difficulty. But John loved a drop in those days, and he had been laying in a fresh supply, some of which he carried under his jacket, and some in a jug, which he had placed in a bag and slung over the saddle. The river had risen some in the meantime, and his judgment was probably not as clear as when he came over. At any rate, the horse soon lost his footing, and began to go down stream in the strong current. The horse was a light one, and not a strong swimmer, and the matter began to look pretty serious, and John concluded he had better "desert the ship." But he had no thought of de-

serting the cargo! So he slung the bag over his shoulder, and struck out for an island near which the current had taken him, which, with great effort, he succeeded in reaching,—wet, cold and shivering; his hat gone; his horse and saddle gone; but *satisfied*, for the *whisky* was safe! and with the air of a conqueror, he swung the jug before the spectators on either bank. I am glad to be able to add that soon after, under the combined influence of Methodism and Washingtonianism, John was saved from a worse flood—from a current swifter and more perilous, and for many years led a sober, christian life; showing that a strong will, supplemented by the grace of God, *can* conquer even the demon appetite for strong drink.

Another little incident occurred during this bridgeless era, which I am at a loss how to classify. O. F. Rogers had been over the river to attend a Methodist meeting, and was accompanying a Miss Allen home, to whom he was paying serious attention. They had to cross on a narrow foot bridge, only one plank wide. Miss Allen was probably deeply affected by the sermon she had heard, or by Rogers' comments, and was a little careless, or perhaps she wanted to put Rogers' professions to some test; at any rate, she made a mis-step, and plump she went into the water. Rogers saw his opportunity—plunged in, and most gallantly rescued the frightened girl from a watery grave! Rogers had been up to this time unsuccessful in his suit; but now, having the law of salvage and the rights of "flotsam and jetsam" on his side, Miss Allen gracefully surrendered, and in due time became Mrs. Rogers. Whether this "finale" should bring the incident in the category of the 'comic' or the 'tragic,' I am at a loss to say—ask Rogers!

There was one more incident of this era which I will relate, and which was almost a *tragedy* one. A man of the name of Gould—a first rate mechanic, who built the "Higley House," a building still extant, (though moved from its original position) was sadly addicted to whisky. During one of the times of high water in spring, Gould crossed in a boat over to the other side to get a supply of his favorite fluid. He first got filled himself and the surplus he had put in a jug, and started out just at night to return. He was in that condition when it was not easy to navigate on dry

land, and when to attempt to manage a boat in a swollen stream is madness. But in that state men are usually ready to commit any folly, and Gould placed his jug in the boat and pushed it off into the current. The result will be readily anticipated. All his efforts at paddling were of no avail. The strong current soon took boat, man and jug, over McKee's old dam together. But they parted company in the plunge. The jug went to the bottom of the river, the boat on its way to New Orleans, and poor Gould was fortunately carried by the current against the roots of a tree which had been carried over the dam before him, and he instinctively grasped hold of them, and drew himself up out of the water, and employed what strength he had left in calling lustily for help. He was heard—and very soon a crowd was gathered upon either bank. But how to rescue him was a problem. Ropes were thrown out to him, but he was too weak and chilled, and perhaps too drunk, to catch hold and fasten them to his body; and if he could have done so, he would have been drowned in the act of being pulled through on either side. No one dare venture in a "dug-out," the only remaining boat, and it really seemed as though the poor fellow must perish there in the middle of the stream, for his voice was getting weaker, and he could evidently hold out but a little longer. At this critical juncture, a stranger, mounted on a good horse, who had just come into town for the night, seeing the crowd, rode up to see what was the occasion of it. He took in the situation at a glance, and without a moment's hesitation rode down the bank, and up the edge of the river until he had got to the spot above Gould, which he judged was right for the force of the current, he boldly struck out and swam his horse to the tree, snatched off the half dead Gould, swung him on to the horse in front of him, and swam out to the other side, and handed the half-drowned man over to his friends, who took him into the nearest house and restored him to consciousness. His rescuer swam his horse back to the east side, and quietly made his way to the hotel, seemingly unconscious that he was the hero of the day. Gould's first inquiry, on coming to a state of consciousness, was—for the friend who had so nobly rescued him from a watery grave?—Alas! no—'twas for the jug which held the enemy that had put him in such fearful peril.

Gould had another water experience somewhat disagreeable, though not quite so perilous. It seemed as if the genii of cold water were bent on revenging the slight which Gould had so long put upon that element.

There used to be in those days a large pond, over in what is now Centre street, just back of Dr. Comstock's, and which was known as Comstock's Pond. There was then no outlet to the water except when it got very high, and the waters that used to accumulate there, would remain for a long time. On the edge of this pond, at what might be called low water, Gould had built his house. The ground was sloping and the rear end was well set up on a very loosely constructed foundation of stones. One night during a powerful rain the water rose very fast, and flooded all around Gould's house, and while Gould and his family were asleep, the current took out the rear wall, and the house took a sudden lurch into the pond. The family were obliged to roost on the chairs and tables until day came, and the neighbors rescued them from their uncomfortable, though not perilous, position.

I wish now, that in Gould's case, I could add that he reformed. But, alas! I have no such record to make in this instance. These experiences seemed only to deepen his hatred of the element, and despite all—despite the perils he had encountered—despite the poverty and wretchedness he brought upon his family—despite the solemn warning of God's word: *no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven!* Gould died as the fool dieth. His fate was the fate of all, whether they be humble mechanics or gifted statesmen, senators or governors, who *will* cling to the damning cup!

But this state of things could not be tolerated forever. The public voice and the public necessities called for bridges. So a special act of incorporation was obtained in 1837, and soon after—having no money—that ingenious substitute, "scrip," was devised, and two bridges were built where the lower and middle ones now stand. They were, to all appearance, substantial wooden structures, and so the two sides were married and became one town, and for a time everything was lovely, and the union was duly "celebrated." But this union was not for life. A divorce was coming without the aid of a Chicago lawyer. The spring of 1838 was

one of unprecedented high water. The river broke up while the ice was still strong, and as the ice went out of the basin it took the upper bridge along with it; and ice, bridge and all, going over the dam, piled up against the lower bridge with a force that nothing made of wood could resist, and so they both went, and we were a divorced couple. It was a grand and sublime spectacle! The entire town, and many from the country, were gathered upon either bank to witness it. A sad, sad sight it was, to tax-payers and scrip-holders! It had its comical aspect, too. When it became apparent that the bridges must go, each one took care that the catastrophe should find him on the side where he took his hash and lodgings—all except two. Westly Jenkins, a great six-footer from Reed's Grove, and Thomas Underwood, a boon companion, were over on the west side, and so absorbed were they by the sight, being a little muddled withal by "corn juice," that they forgot where they were, until just before the lower bridge began to start, when Jenkins woke up, and shouting to Tom to "come on," and without the slightest regard to the sign forbidding the crossing of the bridge faster than a walk, with the stride of a Titan he tore over the creaking bridge, and Tom followed, while the spectators shouted after them, "Five dollars fine! Five dollars fine!" Jenkins had the start and led the race, and got over all right, but before Tom reached the other end it parted from the shore, and he had to make a tremendous leap for the land, and barely reached it, while a shout of congratulation went up from the crowd at his success. This same Jenkins was noted for his voice. The boys used to say that they could hear him here in town when he called his cows. I don't know how this may have been, but when a certain chap in that neighborhood took it into his head that he ought to be a preacher, and insisted that he heard "a call from the Lord," the boys said to him, "*Phsaw! phsaw! John, it was nothing but old Jenkins calling his hogs!*"

Thomas Underwood became a good Methodist soon after the affair of the bridge, and when he told his experience, he attributed his conversion to this incident, and averred that when he took that last leap for the shore, he "*saw all hell staring at him, and foreswore sin and whisky from that good hour.*" So what was our loss, was Tom's great gain!

I am not able to state what was our population in the winter of 1836-7, but that it was not very large will appear from the fact that J. C. Newkirk, (who, by the way, was one of the best lawyers, and one of the best fellows Joliet ever had,) wishing to introduce the New York custom of making New Year's calls, proposed to a friend to call on every family in town. Accordingly they sallied forth to make the attempt. I think they would have accomplished it but for one circumstance. Late in the afternoon they called on Dr. Bowen, who was then living in upper Chicago street, and had his office adjoining his residence. The Doctor, in the exuberance of his hospitality, brought from his office a bottle of wine. Now the Doctor did not pretend to give the date of the vintage, or even the name of the wine, so I cannot tell whether it was "Tokay," or "Heidsiek," or "Johanesberger," or what not, but I have never doubted that he kept it strictly for "medicinal purposes," and his bringing it forth on this occasion was no violation of the rule. From its effects I have always suspected that the bottle from which he took it was labeled, "Vinum Ipecacuanha," or "Vinum Antimonialis." At any rate, it did not seem to agree with what had gone before, and—the callers *soon left—and they did not make any more calls that day!* The Doctor might perhaps urge that it is not fair to lay the breaking of the camel's back to the last straw! The moral of this story is not far to seek. If you make New Year's calls, don't drink any wine—at a doctor's—unless you see the original package!

Probably nothing will show the contrast between 1836 and 1873 so well, and I may say so impressively, as the matter of taxes. Here is my first tax receipt:

" Received of George H. Woodruff, for his taxes for the year 1836, \$1,31  
FENNER ALDRICH, *Sheriff of Will county.*

How brief, vague, and unsatisfactory! Evidently the science of taxation had not then become a high art! Contrast with this the last receipts for 1873. Here they are, most elaborately and artistically divided and subdivided into town, county, state and city—into real and personal—(for my part, I find them all intensely *real*, and intensely *personal*, too)—into district school, district road, and

district bridge; into bridge tax, school tax, school house tax, gas tax, well tax, interest on funded debt tax, rolling mill tax, and dog tax--amounting in the case of *this poor crittur*, to the comforting sum of nearly two hundred dollars,—*he don't keep any dog either!* Ain't that richness? I suppose two more--a water tax and a sewer tax will be added to the bill of fare! And if this be not enough, we can have any amount of "special tax," and a tobacco tax, and a whisky tax, as often as we please! And yet we are not *happy*, not even Jefferson street is happy!

I have found in the public mind sometimes, an impression that the boys were a little fast in those early days. Nothing could be farther from the truth. We were slow then. Boys were not initiated into the mysteries of tobacco until they had graduated from the trundle-bed, and young men were expected to forego cigars when in the presence of the girls. To be sure, each important event, such as getting the stage route, the passage of the county bill, and of the canal bill, etc., etc., had to be celebrated! But it had not then become fashionable for the "upper ten," to which we all belonged, to drink that vilest of human inventions, called "whisky." No, no—we drank "champagne,"—that pure, sparkling beverage, produced in the sunny orchards of New Jersey, and whose only sophistication was the addition of carbonic acid gas, an innocent, harmless drink, comparatively, at least; expensive, to be sure, for when charged with gas, sealed with a green seal, and ornamented with a French label, it was worth two or three dollars per bottle, owing in part, no doubt, to the high tariff between New Jersey and New York. I say a harmless beverage, of which a man *might* drink enough to *get sick*, but not vulgarly drunk—slightly exhilarating it may have been, owing to the gas; there are some traditions of such effects; but surely it was better that a man should be exhilarated—elevated even to the top of the table, than to be thrown under it, or into the gutter! This was before the advent of our Teutonic friend, with his "fust rate lager," and therefore the experience of those days throws no light upon the question whether lager will intoxicate. From observation, however, I judge it will, if properly reduced with "corn juice."

It was at one of these celebrations, at the "Old American,"

that one of the boarders, whose name I am not going to give—but it was *not* “High,” (perhaps it ought to have been), made so much sport for the boys peeking in at the door, as they watched his desperate efforts to light a candle made out of a turnip, which one of them had substituted for the “regulation tallow dip.” I don’t know whether he ever found out what was the matter, but he thought at the time it was because the lamp on the mantle *kept dodging about so!*

Joliet has had some notable justices of the peace; but I think that in this matter our neighboring town of Lockport has beat us. She once had a justice of the peace, whose name we will call C. J. Justices of the Peace were authorized to take the acknowledgment of deeds, and the law required that the wife of the grantor should be examined by the justicee separate and apart, and out of the hearing of her husband, to relinquish her dower. Now it happened that this C. J. was himself an operator in lots, and on one occasion having made a sale, he executed the deed with his wife, and then, as justice of the peace, took his own acknowledgment, and also that of his wife, “separate and apart and out of the hearing of her said husband.” How this feat was accomplished, I am unable to inform you, but that he did it there can be no doubt, for there it stands under his hand and seal, on the county records! I am free to tell this now, as the man has been dead over seven years, and it is too late for our lawyers to bring an ejectment on the score of defective acknowledgment.

It was one of the curious provisions of the law in the times of which I am speaking, that each person could let his cattle and hogs run at large, and that he could identify them by certain ear marks, which were to be recorded in a book kept by the county clerk. Hence it happened that, even in those days, when we had no mayor and common council, no marshal and police, and not even a city ordinance forbidding it—I say without any of these modern encouragements, hogs and cattle ran at large in our streets. Hence the following incident: Demmond & Curry were trading in the old stone block, and doing a barter business, and took in considerable butter, which they kept in the cellar. Now it happened also, that Dr. Adams owned a fancy hog, of the “school

section breed," one of the long-nosed kind that are said to stick the snout through a fence and pick off the third row of corn. This hog, by a kind of prescience which only a hog has, seemed to know in a moment when the cellar door was left open, and no matter in what part of the township he might be wandering, or what might be his previous engagements, he instantly appeared upon the scene, and slipped in; and thus it happened that many a jar of butter was rendered unfit for anything except a Chicago restaurant. The boys had stood this until forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, and they swore vengeance. One rainy night as they were about to close up, they heard his hogship enter the cellar; so, instead of driving him out, they shut the outside door and held him prisoner. They caught him, and saturated him thoroughly with spirits of turpentine, and taking him to the door, touched the candle to him and bid him go! *And he went!* He stood not upon the order of his going—but with an unearthly yell he tore through the street, lighting up the darkness with the lurid blaze, and terribly frightening the canal-ers, men and women, who verily believed it was the "devil himself" fresh from hell; and they called upon all the saints in the calendar for protection. On, on went Mr. Hog!—straight for Higley's barn, one of his lodging places; and the boys began to think that they had got into a worse scrape than the hog. But, fortunately, the hog concluded not to stop, but went through so quick that the fire did not catch; and putting straight for the river, like the swine of old, plunged in the water, and "silence and darkness, solemn sisters," reigned again. I am sorry for it, but I don't think this story has any moral. Fortunately for the boys, this was before the advent of Bergh!

I had intended to give several personal sketches of some of our early settlers who have passed away, but I have already, I fear, wearied your patience, and will postpone all but one to chapter 2d of this history.

Dr. Comstock will be well remembered as (for a long time) one of our most respected citizens and physicians. He was somewhat eccentric, and many anecdotes could be told of him. He was a man of strong mind, and of considerable culture, both literary and professional. He could repeat the standard poets by the yard, and

was at home in Virgil, in the original. He was *not* remarkable for his "style," either in dress or equipage. He was also a local preacher of the Methodist church, and often supplied acceptably the pulpit of his own and other churches in the absence of the regular preacher. He had a brother living in Michigan, who often came to visit him, and who was in some respects very much *like* him, while in others he was very *unlike*. He had held the position of chaplain to Congress at one time, and was always very sleek and well dressed, and carried a gold-headed cane. He was also a physician, and also a preacher, but of the Baptist faith, although not of the "hard shell" variety. I used to think of Dickens' "Cheeryble brothers" whenever I saw them together. They were very much attached to each other, and our Methodist doctor always marked with a white stone the day when his brother came to visit him. On one occasion as our Methodist doctor was in front of his house, about getting into his old wagon for a professional tour,—house, horse, wagon and himself, very much alike in their general make up—the Baptist doctor drove up in a splendid new "sulky," one of those unsocial vehicles which will hold but *one*. The Methodist doctor saw him coming, took in at a glance the whole rig—in such marked contrast to his own—and although longing to rush up and take his brother by the hand, he coolly folded his arms, surveys for an instant the Baptist and his "turn-out," and with a merry twinkle of the eye, exclaims: "Close communion—carriage and all."

The brothers have long since passed away from earth, and have no doubt met and embraced each other where the things in which they were *unlike* are as nothing, and the things in which they were alike, have become all in all!

Many, many are the memories that rush upon me—but I must close. Our subject is only another illustration of the oft told tale. Change, change is written upon all human things! How much of what was so real forty years ago has passed away! The present seems almost another civilization. We hear no more of "claims," and "floats," and "pre-emptions;" of "squatters" and "squatters' rights," and "Indian payments," and "land sales." "Wolf hunts" delight us no longer. The "Hoosier," with his peculiar

dress and dialect, cracking his formidable ox-gad as he drives his long breaking team, and with his huge plow turning over the virgin sward, and ruthlessly burying whole hecatombs of flowers, and leaving behind him those long ribbons of black, rich earth, inviting the foot of the planter—he, and his plow, are things of the past. The long trains of “prairie schooners,” laden with flour and bacon for Chicago and intermediate ports, which used to form such a picturesqe sight, slowly wending their way over the prairie swells, have given place to the longer and swifter railway train. The “Indian trail,” once so well defined, has been obliterated by the track of the locomotive. The prairies themselves have disappeared. True, there is the same soil—the same townships and sections, but they are the

“\* \* \* gardens of the desert;  
‘The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful’”

no longer. The great magician, “labor,” the sound of whose coming footsteps was just beginning to be heard forty years ago, has waved his wand, and lo! all those fair wastes have been changed to cultivated farms—the landscape is checkered with fences, hedges and roads—dotted with orchards and dwellings, with churches and school houses, and all the evidences of an advanced civilization.

And while the same wooded bluffs still shut in this valley, and form so beautiful a frame work,—here upon this rocky bottom, forty years ago so barren and uninteresting, lo! a city is here! Here are streets lined on either side with the palaces of trade,—the smoke of manufactories ascends where was then seen only that of the wigwam or the prairie fire,—and homes of wealth, comfort and refinement, churches and school houses, hotels, warehouses and opera houses, fill in and complete the picture.

I have but one tear of regret to shed over all this change. It is for the flowers—the native flowers, once so abundant and so beautiful. For, with the prairies, these too have passed away. I search long, now, to find the Hepatica of spring. The “*Lobelia Cardinalis*” no longer flaunts its scarlet banner; the fragrant “*Spiranthes*” has ceased to breathe its perfume; and it is only in hidden nooks that the “*Dodecatheon*” still lifts its graceful

stem, crowned with its nodding, starry umbel;—while in all my walks I meet no more the “Fringed Gentian,” that beautiful flower, dyed in heaven’s own blue —

“ That waitest late, and com’st alone,  
When woods are bare, and birds have flown,  
And frosts, and short’ning days portend  
The aged year is near its end.”

## LECTURE II.



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## LECTURE II.

DELIVERED AT THE OPERA HOUSE, JOLIET, MARCH 24TH, 1874.

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SOME one has defined History to be "Philosophy, teaching by example." I suppose this is a very good definition. I think it *exactly* describes the kind of history I am trying to give the public, of early days in Joliet and Will county. Of course, in one lecture only a beginning could be made. This was all I expected to do when I gave my first lecture. But as I had several "examples" left over, and as I have gathered new matter since, I have thought that another chapter of our early history might prove equally interesting. I think it will be found quite as *historical*, and quite as *philosophical* as the first. Of one thing you may rest assured, that everything is *founded* upon fact!

It has often occurred to me while collecting memoranda, and trying to recall events, that it would have been a happy thing if Mr. Clement, or myself, had kept a diary from our first arrival in this county. If I had access to such a record, I could have made these lectures much more interesting, with much less labor. I urge, therefore, upon my young friends here, as one of the lessons to be got from this effort, the duty of keeping a diary. I mean a record of facts, occurrences, dates, characters, etc. A note or two each day, of whatever happens, (and you will find that something happens every day) is easily made, and might prove very valuable hereafter. You may wish to give a historical lecture yourself some day. So, young man, young woman, begin such a diary at once

and please set down for the first entry, that on the 24th day of March, 1874, Mr. George H. Woolruff, one of the longest residents of Joliet, delivered a highly interesting lecture, etc., etc. Perhaps some one digging in the ruins of Joliet some centuries hence may stumble upon the record, and your name and mine, together, go down the ages! Please be careful that you do not omit the "H," for my good friend "the banker" has already had the credit of too many of my good things, while I have had to bear the blame--well, well—he belongs to the family, and I won't be hard on him.

From the year 1836, the history of Joliet and Will county has been intimately associated with the canal. I gave in my former lecture the points in its history, from its conception to commencement. The first ground was broken at Bridgeport, July 4th, 1836. Chicago celebrated the event in the style of that day. Dr. William B. Egan delivered an able address on the occasion. The work was commenced on the plan of the "deep cut," that is, feeding it directly from Lake Michigan, through the south branch of the Chicago river, as is now done. At the time of letting the first contracts the mania for speculation was at its height, and labor and provisions were extremely high for those times. Labor was twenty to thirty dollars per month, with board. Pork twenty to thirty dollars per barrel; flour nine to twelve dollars, and other things in proportion. The first contracts were predicated upon these high prices. To facilitate the construction of the canal, a road was opened from Chicago to Lockport, known as "Archer's Road," from the acting commissioner, on which \$40,000 dollars were expended. The propriety of this expenditure was much questioned at the time, and unfortunately for the reputation of Archer for disinterestedness, he was the proprietor of an addition to Lockport. But it is certain that supplies for the laborers had mainly to be brought from abroad, as at this time no great surplus was raised along the line.

The work was prosecuted by means of the money obtained from the sale of bonds, and of canal lands and lots, in Chicago, Lockport, Ottawa and La Salle, until 1842, at an outlay of over five million dollars, when the work was suspended.

Although the enterprise was commenced when everything had to be done in the most expensive way, and when the country was on the eve of a great financial crash, yet the State could easily have gone through with it, and maintained her credit, if other projects had not been connected with it. The central and southern portions of the State, with very narrow views, looked upon the canal as entirely for the benefit of the north, and insisted upon compensating railroads, as the price of their votes for further appropriations to the canal; and, in 1837, the act was passed, which ultimately swamped the credit of our State and brought on our financial ruin. By this act a loan of eight millions was authorized, on the faith of the State, for the purpose of grid-ironing the State with railroads, and a four million loan for the further prosecution of the canal. The sum of two hundred thousand dollars from the eight million loan, was to be given to those counties through which no railroad passed, for the construction of roads and bridges. And, absurd as was this scheme at that time, loans were made to the amount of nearly six millions.

As the practical result of all this, a short railroad was built from Springfield to Meredosia, and various others commenced at either end, as the act required, and great quantities of railroad iron were imported, free of duty, by special act of congress. But before any other road was completed, the whole scheme came to a disgraceful end. It may not be improper to remark in passing, that it was by the purchase afterwards, (paying in depreciated scrip at par) of this railroad iron of the State, and selling to eastern roads, that Governor Matteson laid the foundation of his fortune. The great commercial prostration which struck the east in 1837, was, by means of the disbursement of these canal and railroad loans, warded off from us for a year or two, and the work of the canal was kept along, although feebly, until 1842, by the help of canal scrip, and of the "contractors' loan," as it was called, from the fact that the contractors had sent General Thornton to Europe to sell bonds, they agreeing to stand the discount, even to twenty-five per cent. if necessary. This they could afford to do, now that the prices of labor and provisions had greatly fallen.

By the fall of 1840, a debt had been contracted by the State

of \$14,237,348, which must be paid by a population of 478,929—nearly thirty dollars for every man, woman and child. And this amount does not include what the State had misapplied from the school fund, and from the surplus deposits of the United States. By great exertion the interest on the canal debt was paid up to, and including 1841; but for 1842 no provision could be made, and the work stopped entirely. An expenditure, as I have already said, of over five millions had been made upon it, and the contractors abandoned their jobs, claiming heavy damages of the State. An act was passed for a settlement with them, limiting the amount to two hundred and thirty thousand dollars.

To the credit of our State let it be said, that the idea of repudiation was never seriously entertained by our people, to any extent, and subsequent prosperity and wise legislation have long since obliterated the debt.

But the canal could not, of course, be allowed to remain long in this condition. The bondholders were equally interested with us in devising some means for its speedy completion. It was a work of too great and too general importance to be abandoned altogether. In the session of 1842-3, an act was passed which ultimately succeeded in accomplishing this purpose. By this act, the canal itself, and all its unsold lots and lands, were to be transferred to a board of three trustees, two to be chosen by the bondholders and one by the governor of the State. The bondholders were to advance the further sum of \$1,600,000 to complete the canal on another level. The trustees were to prosecute the work and retain possession of the canal and its revenues until the debt and further cost of its construction, and interest on the same, should be fully paid by the tolls and moneys derived from the sale of lands and lots. The board was organized and the work was resumed in 1845, and prosecuted until fully completed in 1848.

The debt of the canal, and all costs of its construction, and the interest thereon, were paid from these resources in the year 1871, and the canal surrendered to the State, with a balance on hand of \$95,742.

In 1865, an arrangement had been entered into by the trustees with the Board of Public Works of Chicago, by which the canal

has been completed upon the original plan of a deep cut, feeding directly from the Chicago river, thus making it the grand sewer of Chicago nastiness, and justifying at times to our olfactories the theory that the name "*Chicago*," was originally derived from that animal familiarly known as "skunk." The Indian who christened it, must have had a prophetic *smell* of 1873! Let us console ourselves with the fact, that we have now an abundant water power, and that our basins are always full, if not fragrant!

In closing this brief history of the canal, I wish to pay a tribute to its chief engineer, William Gooding, who was its firm friend from first to last, its efficient director, and against whom no suspicions of jobbery were ever entertained. Fully a master of his profession, prepared for all emergencies, urbane in his intercourse with all, he is entitled to the grateful remembrance of every citizen of this State, to the prosperity of which he has been so largely instrumental.

The opening of the canal in 1848, was of course a day of great rejoicing, from Chicago to La Salle. Boats started simultaneously from each end to pass over the route. The boat from Chicago arrived here about noon, with a load of notables, bands of music, etc., etc., and while stopping here, speeches were made, champaigne corks flew, and there was a "high time" generally. But there was one sad accident, which marred the general joyousness. The Joliet boys had procured a cannon, which they placed on the east side of the basin and fired across it. The cannon by some means got elevated too high—I guess the boys who were handling it had got elevated themselves—at any rate, a heavy wad came across the basin and struck a highly respected citizen of the name of Peter Adams, in the region of the stomach, whereupon he fell at once, and the cry arose that a man was killed! The shouting of the crowd was hushed at once, and due sadness and solemnity fell upon all countenances. But after Peter got over his astonishment and his *nausea*, it was discovered that the only serious injury he had sustained, *was the loss of his breakfast!*

I have brought down the history of the canal to a late date, in order to present all the points in a connected sketch, and will now

go back to the earlier period, to which I wish generally to confine myself.

The construction of the canal of course destroyed McKee's water power, and made his mill useless. The present dam was commenced in 1839, and completed in 1841. McKee recovered damages of the commissioners in 1841, to the amount of \$17,655 and costs.

The opening of the canal was a new era in the history of this city and vicinity. Hitherto goods had been transported from Chicago chiefly by ox-teams, drawing the old Pennsylvania canvas-covered wagon, generally called "prairie schooner," and not inappropriately.

A stage route was established as early as January, 1834, between Chicago and Ottawa, running by Plainfield, or Walker's Grove. Judge Caton informs me that he piloted the company which first went through and established the stations, and that the party suffered greatly from the intense cold. In 1837, the stage came from Plainfield across to Joliet, and then passed down the river to Ottawa. After a year or two more the route was changed again, going to Chicago directly up this river, on the west side, and leaving Plainfield out in the cold. A tedious ride it used to be, by stage, to Chicago, especially when we went round by Plainfield. Just think of it, you who are so impatient at the hour and a half required now to pass from the one point to the other; an entire day used to be required to make the passage, and sometimes when the roads were bad, considerable of the night, too. I remember when coming back from the East in the fall of 1837, the driver of the stage lost his way in coming across from Plainfield, and wandered about quite a while on the trackless prairie. In those days, the arrival of the stage and the mail was *the event* in our daily life. Frequently there were two or three "extras," and the capacity of the "Old American" and the "Higley House," and later, of the "National," were often taxed to their utmost to supply the "wheat bread" and "chicken fixings" which the travelers required, while the regular boarders very often had to take up with "corn bread and common doings." When the canal was completed in 1848, of course the day of stages was over, and friend "Kipp,"

and others, had to give up the "ribbons," and the day of the Packet Boat and "Captain Connell" had come,—only to be superseded in its turn, by the rushing railway train. What device shall displace the last, who can conjecture?

In 1839, two young men of limited means, but of great energy and perseverance, Philo A. and Orlando H. Haven, having purchased lots on the school section on each side of the river below the city, and finding that between McKee's dam and their lots, there was a fall of four or five feet, constructed a dam and commenced a saw mill, and afterwards a grist mill. This, with subsequent improvements, is now known as the "City Mills." At the time they began their operations the plan of the canal had not been changed. But when the canal was completed upon the subsequent plan, the water power was of little value, as during the season of navigation the river was required to feed the level below. They recovered some damage of the trustees for the loss. This water power has been greatly benefited by the deepening of the canal.

The digging of the canal introduced a new element into the history of civilization in Will county,—an element which produced great physical, social and moral changes. For it was then that the great Celtic invasion took place. To dig a canal, at least four things are necessary—a shovel, a pick, a wheelbarrow and an Irishman. And it is something wonderful, that wherever a canal or a railroad is to be constructed these instrumentalities instantly appear upon the scene, ready for the work. Here, now, is the place for a disquisition upon the Irishman. I wish I was equal to the task. It is a subject upon which a great deal has been said and written, and on which much more might be said, and yet the subject would not be exhausted. Many, looking only at one side of him, have drawn partial and unjust conclusions. Some have unduly elevated him, especially just before an election; others have unduly depreciated him, especially just after an election. Whatever I say of him shall be in a purely philosophical spirit, remembering the high office of the historian. I can afford to do this, as I do not expect ever to run for office. The Irishman has unquestionably a great many traits of character. I have come to this

conclusion after many years of observation and much intercourse with him, in social, business and political relations. He is a very composite character. He has more human nature than any other member of the human family with which I am acquainted. For he resembles the Yankee in his fondness for office, and his shrewdness at a bargain. He is like the Englishman in his obstinacy and utter inability to see anything he does not wish to see. He is like the Scotchman, in his love of polemics and *whisky*; and like the German in his love of metaphysics and tobacco. He resembles the Frenchman in his mercurial temper, and the agility with which he gets up when knocked down; and the Italian in his love of poetry, song, and dirt. He is like the Spaniard in his love of a fight, and his readiness to back out when getting worsted. And he resembles that great character, "Jack Falstaff," in being not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others;—while in his gift of gab, in his love of palaver, and his powers of blarney, he is "*sui generis*,"—like himself, and nobody else! If you have not now a clear conception of the Irishman, it is not my fault. That he will contribute his full share to the make-up of the coming American citizen, there can be no doubt.

As an example of his readiness for a fight, it becomes my duty to relate the history of the first Irish War. Oh! for that pen which recorded the doughty deeds of Antony Van Corlear and the Heroes of "*Communipaw!*" But I havn't got it, and must use the one I have, poor as it is. As to the origin of this war, I find there is now a difference of opinion. Some contend that it was only the chronic quarrel between the Corkonians and the Fardowns. Others, that it was because they were not promptly paid, or paid in "*wild cat*" money. I should not be surprised if the "*byes*" themselves did not understand at the time what it was all about. For, indeed, I have never seen that it made any difference with an Irishman, whether he understood what he was fighting for or not. But be this as it may, on the 4th of July, 1838, word came down the line early in the morning, that there was a terrible riot up on Wallace's job, near Romeo, and that they were killing each other and the contractors at a terrible rate, and help was called for without delay. So, instead of celebrating the deeds of our fathers of

1776, as we were preparing to do, we were ourselves called upon to "mount our barbed steeds" and sally forth to "grim visaged war." Fenner Aldrich, our sheriff at that time,—many of you know "Uncle Fenner,"—called out the largest force he could muster, under the name and style of the "*Posse Comitatus*" of Will county, and among the rest, my old friend N. H. Cutter and myself went along. I had never been called by this big latin name before, and I felt quite proud of the honor. I still do; and I wish hereby to transmit to my posterity the fact that I was an integral part of the first great *Posse Comitatus* of Will county. I think this is about the best thing I shall have to transmit! We had also a military company, called the "Juliet Guards," Edmond Wilcox, captain, armed and equipped for bloody war. This was also mustered in by the sheriff. But "Uncle Fenner" himself had no military title, and therefore did not understand the science of war. So he delegated the strategic direction of the expedition to Captain Fellows, who had acquired great skill and experience by long service in the New York Militia, and knew how to advance and retreat, "shoulder arms" and "fix baganets," etc., and who, being equipped in Major Cook's uniform, and girt with his terrible sword, looked as though he could

"Fright the souls of fearful adversaries,"

even though they came in the shape of paddies, armed to the teeth with stout shellalahs, and brimful of wrath and whisky. Thus "Uncle Fenner" and Captain Fellows led on, supported by Capt. Wilcox and the Juliet Guards, while the great *Posse Comitatus*, in solid column, brought up the rear. After one or two hours of hard riding we drew near Romeo, and soon came in sight of the enemy, flourishing seythes, pitchforks and shellalahs. A halt was ordered, and we, the *Posse Come-and-take-us*, sat upon our horses in deep silence, while the leaders held a council of war. It was a solemn time!

I suppose nothing can equal in impressiveness that brief moment which precedes a battle. We thought of the day, and of the deeds of our fathers, and nerved our stomachs for the fight which seemed about to open. Some examined their "pocket pistols," and "kept their spirits up by pouring spirits down." Uncle Fen-

ner's chin quivered. And now occurred one of those beautiful examples of modesty and self-renunciation which redeems poor human nature, for no one seemed covetous of the post of honor—each was willing to give his neighbor the front rank! I don't think I wished to be conspicuous myself! But there was no shrinking from the fight! We boldly advanced—*slowly, and with great caution.* Rashness is not heroism! We did not even throw out skirmishers. The music sounded, and we unfurled the stars and stripes. What should we, the great Will county "*Posse Comitatus*," and the Juliet Guards, prove craven at such a time!—on such a day as this! No! no!—Our wives and children should never blush at the mention of our names. The Guards are ordered to fire a blank volley! They did so without *winking*. Tremendous was the effect! The enemy could not "bide the smell of powder." Forthwith they drop their weapons, break ranks, and skedaddle over the hills! Now, now, the great *Posse Comitatus* feel equal to anything! We could each one of us face the *heels* of a thousand paddies! We chase them over the hills and hunt them through the shanties, and drive them from under the beds, equally unawed by the threats, billingsgate and hot water of the women, and unseduced by their blandishments and blarney! We had come out as the great *Posse Comitatus* of Will county, for the high and holy purpose of maintaining justice and good order, and we *would* be a *Posse Comitatus* until these high ends were secured. And so we circulate up and down the works, and through the woods, until about forty prisoners were secured with which to grace the triumphant return of the great *Posse Comitatus*.

And now, the battle being over and victory having perched upon our banners, the majesty of the law being vindicated—the great *Posse Comitatus* having shown itself equal to the emergency—it is apparent that, after all, the great *Posse Comitatus* is only human, for it is terribly dry and ravenously hungry. And now we discover that one of the great sinews of war has been overlooked. The *Posse Comitatus* have provided no rations, either liquid or solid. We could not levy contributions upon the enemy, for they had nothing suited to the stomachs of a *Posse Comitatus*. And so, tired and hungry, we turn our faces homeward, and each man, with

one hand pressed upon an “aching void,” rides slowly back, and by the time the great “*Posse Comitatus*” arrived at Joliet it was so badly demoralized that it did not wait for a public reception and the thanks of a grateful country; but having delivered over the prisoners, each man started for his home, or a hotel, or a *grocery*, with a haste that was sublime, and the great “*Posse Comitatus*”—

“ \* \* \* melted into air, into thin air,  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Left not a rack behind.”

Yes, it did leave a small “rack,” in the shape of some forty prisoners. These were examined, and fourteen of them held for trial. And inasmuch as our jail facilities were limited, and the weather hot, a special term of court was ordered for their trial. They were accordingly tried, the grand jury having found indictments for riot, assault, attempt to murder, etc., etc. John M. Wilson, now Judge Wilson of Chicago, was the principal lawyer in the defense, although he had formed one of the great “*Posse Comitatus*.” It was said at the time to be a nice stroke of business. The principal witness was the contractor, Wallace, who had been the principal subject of the assault. There is no doubt that he had been badly scared. He told such a tale of the numbers that assaulted him, and the variety of weapons with which he had been belabored, that it would have been a miracle for any one to have come out of such a melee alive; and yet he was unhurt. His whole story was so extravagant and improbable that Wilson turned the whole thing into ridicule, by reading from Shakespeare the account which Falstaff gave of the attack made upon him by the “men in buckram,” which, if you don’t remember, please see and read. It was so *pat*, that notwithstanding the ruling of Judge Pearson, that “it was not law in *this court*,” it led to the disagreement of the jury and the final abandonment of the prosecution.

It is a curious fact, that when the late war broke out no one thought of looking to the survivors of this great *Posse Comitatus* for generals to lead on our armies. The memory of its heroic deeds seems to have passed entirely from the minds of men. I presume that not one in a thousand of my hearers ever heard of it.

Another proof of the ingratitude of Republics! It is some consolation that I have rescued a few names from oblivion!

We had several Irish wars after this, but none so terrible and bloody. Timid people lived in constant fear of what the Irish would do. And this reminds me of an incident. I have spoken of Jenks, as county clerk, etc. Well, about this time he had to surrender these offices. He was an ardent Methodist, and he thought he would take up preaching. Among other qualifications which he possessed for this profession, he had a loud, strong voice, and he was specially gifted in prayer; and when he got deeply engaged—so to speak, got on a full head of steam—he could be heard all over the village. One evening Mrs. W—, who lived in chronic fear of an Irish riot, came running into a neighbor's house, greatly excited, saying that there was a great noise over the river, and she was sure there was an Irish riot, and that her husband was over there, and she begged the neighbor to go with her and get him home. So the neighbor went along. He too heard the noise, and after crossing the old foot bridge on the island, and coming up toward the old Methodist church, he presently divined the occasion of it, and turning about he said to Mrs. W— that she could dismiss her fears, and go home, as it was nothing but brother Jenks praying!

You probably do not *need* any illustration of the wit, and readiness of the Irish at repartee. It is proverbial. But I have one which is entirely new and original, and has never got into the papers, and belongs to Joliet. It may have occurred a little later than the time of which I speak, but as I give it as an illustration of character, I shall not be guilty of an anachronism. A good old lady of our city, who chanced to be the mother of a prominent citizen, one who either was, had been, or expected to be a Congressman, had in her employ a "Biddy," who was, in most respects I presume, like other "Biddies." At any rate she was in one thing—a disposition to absent herself at very inconvenient times. On one occasion, when the good lady was especially busy, and did not know how to spare her, Biddy announced her intention to be "gone of a morning," giving as her excuse that it was a "howly day." "Ah, indeed, and what kind of a "howly" day is

it?" the mistress asked in her vexation. "Well, sure, and she didn't exactly know, but it was the Vargin Mary's day," "Virgin Mary, indeed," says the mistress, "what if it is, the Virgin Mary was nothing but a woman—no better than I am." "Indade, that may be so," says Biddy, "*but sure you'll allow there was a wonderful difference in the sons ye bore!*"

With this, we dismiss the Irishman from our special notice, except to say that very many of the laborers brought in here by the canal accumulated money, invested it in lots and lands, and they and their descendants form a considerable and valuable portion of our population, both in town and county, and have furnished some of our best citizens, never failing in their duty at the polls—as Yankees often do—or refusing to hold office, *even that of alderman*, when the public good demands it! Some of our best business young men, and some of our prettiest girls too, are the descendants of these old canal-ers. And here is the place to say, that the Catholic Church which forms so prominent an object on the Bluff, was mainly built by contributions from the canal boys, under the active efforts of Father Plunkett, one of the first priests of that church here. It was, I believe, while on one of his tours of collection, that he came to his death. While riding through a piece of timber near Channahon, against a driving storm, with his head bent down to avoid its force, and riding very hard, he struck his head against a tree with such force as to kill him instantly.

The construction of the canal was the first occasion of the marking of the contour of the Joliet Mound. This spot I suppose is familiar to all my hearers. It attracted the attention of the early explorers. Schoolcraft describes it, and has a view of it in his book of western travel. He conjectured it to be the work of the mound builders. But I think that it is now generally conceded to have been formed by the action of water, and was probably an island made by an eddy in the great river which once swept through this valley from bluff to bluff. The ridges and bluffs in the vicinity are composed of the same material, which shows the action of water. This origin is almost demonstrated, now that the mound has been dug into a considerable depth, and found to be composed entirely of sand and gravel, deposited upon a bed of clay,

and not the slightest evidence of an artificial origin has been found. This mound was a place of some resort in the early day for drives and pic-nics, being the only "lion" which we had to show our visitors. There was once a house upon it, built in 1835, to secure a pre-emption. From the top of it there is a view of the lake and of the encircling wooded bluffs, which was pronounced very pretty by Miss Martineau, who visited it in an early day, and who thought it fine enough to be noticed in her book of travels. Its beauty and symmetry have been much injured by the excavation for material to construct the bank of the canal which passes at its foot, along the south-eastern side. Our friend Judge Wilson, of Chicago, happened to be riding past it just about the time the canal diggers were laying their sacriligious hands upon it, and was filled with no little indignation thereat, branding the actors as "*vandals*." I presume time and a change of circumstances has mellowed somewhat his judgment of the act, since the "Joliet Mound Tile Company" have continued the vandalism by the sale of gravel from its bowels, and by turning its clay-bed into tile and brick, and so into cash. The Judge often visits that locality now, and I am credibly informed, looks on very complacently while the paddies *vandalize* with their picks and shovels!

In a very interesting work just published, written by N. Matson, of Bureau county, on the "French and Indians of the Illinois River," I find a very interesting tradition in connection with this mound. One of the most celebrated Indians of history was Pontiac, the chief of the Ottawas of Michigan. After the surrender of the Northwest by the French to England in 1763, Pontiac for a while contested the claims of the English, and was known as their most able and bitter enemy. When he could no longer maintain the contest, he left the vicinity of Detroit, where he was born and had always lived, and with the remnants of his once powerful tribe, (about two hundred warriors and their families) found a refuge on the banks of the Kankakee, in this county, somewhere in the vicinity of Wilmington. He merged the remnants of his tribe into that of the Pottawattamies. This region was claimed by the "Illinois," and a conflict arose between the tribes especially in reference to the right to hunt the buffalo to the west of the Illi-

nois river. After fighting over the matter a while, a council was agreed upon to settle the question. This council met at Mound Joliet, in 1769. During a speech which Pontiac was making in support of his side of the question, he was treacherously assassinated by "Kinboo," the head chief of the Illinois. This act of treachery led to the bloody war which resulted in the destruction of the great Indian city, "La Vantam," which stood on the site where the paper city of Utica was afterwards built, and to the tragedy of Starved Rock, and the ultimate extinction of the great nation of the Illinois.

As the prospect of a canal, the commencement of work upon it, and its vigorous prosecution for a time, greatly contributed to our growth and prosperity, bringing in numerous additions to our population, and furnishing a ready market for the surplus productions of our farmers, and for the goods brought on by our merchants: so, of course, the suspension of the work added to the evils of a worthless currency, and the general commercial revulsion of the country—greatly depressed business, and arrested for a time all improvement. Then followed years of great business famine, all over the State. All the canal towns were the greatest sufferers. It is a curious fact, that an act was passed for the relief of those who had purchased on credit canal lots in Chicago—purchased at prices which would hardly buy a foot of ground now, even at Bridgeport. Immigration avoided a State thought to be so hopelessly in debt, and many left our incipient city never to return. Our streets yielded a magnificent crop of mustard and stramonium, and the merchants and their clerks, and others, pitched quoits and played ball in them, undisturbed by teams or customers. It would have been a splendid time to dig sewers, for it would not have interrupted business! We had plenty of time to botanize, to hunt prairie chickens, gather wild plums and hickory nuts, and enjoy "the shakes."

It was during this period that a well-known citizen, whom, it was feared, had become a hopeless "old bach," got interested in the study of botany, and somehow he got a young lady interested in the same study, and the happy result was that she became Mrs. C.—and I am happy to see them both now before me, with a son and a daughter, both old enough to *study botany too!*

There were other compensating circumstances. It cost but a trifle to live. Provisions and fuel were cheap, rents low, taxes light, no gas bills or special taxes; whisky and tobacco, and all other necessaries, could be had at a trifle compared with present prices. I could almost wish a return of the time—not on account of the cheap whisky and tobacco! It was also a great compensation that the Goddess of Fashion was not then so exacting and exorbitant in her demands. I do not suppose a five dollar feather could have been found in Will county. Our ladies did not study "Harper's Bazar" or "Mrs. Demorest," and the omnipotent "Mrs. Grundy" was little regarded.

But there were other and still better compensations. The people had time for the consideration of great moral questions. As it is a law of physics, that no two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time, so it seems to be a law of mind that it can entertain but one controlling subject at a time. A man who is absorbed in the one object of acquiring money, especially if successful, is prone to forget all other and higher interests of himself, his family, or society at large. Hence commercial reverses may prove our greatest blessings. "In the day of adversity he may consider." It was during this era of "hard times" that the great temperance and anti-slavery interests flourished and produced abiding effects. Revivals of religion also occurred, which wrought great and happy changes. The Washingtonian movement, which occurred in the years 1841-2, produced at the time a wonderful excitement, but one of the healthiest and happiest kind. A repetition of it would be a blessing now!

It is true, that in some instances the reformation of the Washingtonian movement proved only to be temporary. But in many others it was permanent, and its trophies are still left among us. I confess I take great pleasure in referring to such cases. The man who conquers this habit is the greatest of heroes! But that such achievements are possible, our history abundantly shows. I gave one or two instances in my former lecture. Let me relate one more. You may perhaps remember the name of Andrew Boland, as one of our early settlers. He had been a United States' soldier, and in 1819 he passed down through this valley, on a march from

Chicago to St. Louis, and was so pleased with the beauty of the region, that after his discharge from the army he came here in 1834, with others of his family. Boland was—I say, was—for though still living, he has gone to Kansas—a man of strong sense and great native wit. But unfortunately he had formed intemperate habits. He had sprees, and at such times he would hang around the groceries as long as they would keep him. A “hoosier”—one of those men who always said “*which*,” and whom we used to call “Chat”—kept a doggery in those days, and Andrew was one of his best customers. Indeed it was not easy sometimes to get rid of him. One time, while sleeping off his potations on a bench in “Chat’s” grocery, the time having come to close up, Chat took hold of Boland, and shaking him rather roughly, told him to wake up and to get out. Boland rose up, and steadying himself with one hand on the counter, improvised this *epitaph* as a parting word for Chat:

“Chat was an old Hoosier, who, while on earth, was very rich,  
When the archangel’s trump shall sound he’ll rise, and answer, “*which?*”

Well, as I have said, Andrew afterwards reformed thoroughly, under the joint influence of the Washingtonian movement and a Methodist revival. But I am not sure that these would have been sufficient in his case, had not a *third* power come to the rescue, in the form of a *widow*, who took him in hand, married him, and made the work permanent and complete!

I have mentioned the old stone block of six stores, on Bluff street, as being at one time the centre of business on the west side. The history of this block would itself furnish sufficient matter for a longer lecture than you would listen to, could but a tithe of it be recalled. Besides the mercantile establishments which occupied the first floors, there were offices in the second stories, and in the third, residences and halls for public uses. Runways from the bluff made these upper stories easily accessible from that part of the town. In the *third* story of the south store, then occupied and owned by B. & T. Allen & Co., was set up the first printing press, and published the first newspaper of Joliet. This was done in the spring of 1839, by thirteen of our citizens of democratic faith,

among them the Allen's and Mr. Clement. A press which had been shipped to Ottawa, but for some reason was not wanted there, was offered on favorable terms, which they bought. In the course of the spring they got an elderly man by the name of Balch, who had edited a paper in Michigan, to take charge of it, and he issued in the spring the first number of this paper, calling it the "*Juliet Courier*." The first impression which was taken is still preserved by Mr. Clement. It is dated April 20th, 1839, and is a very creditable paper, both in its mechanical and literary make up. Of course it has no telegraphic column, with its flaring headings. The principal items of general news which it contains, is the armistice brought about by General Scott between Governor Fairchild of Maine, and Sir John Harvey of New Brunswick, in relation to the Maine Boundary—a question which well nigh involved us in a war with England. Also, an item in respect to the Florida war, in which the Indians seem to be getting the best of it. It contains the proceedings of a county temperance society, reported by H. N. Marsh, secretary, which contains a vote of "thanks to J. M. Wilson, Esq., for his able and interesting address." It contains also the organization of the newly elected board of trustees, as we called the city fathers of that day. This was the *third* board elected, and was composed of Wm. A. Chatfield, Wm. Scholfield, Charles Clement, George Woodruff and Franklin Mitchell. It is also stated that the canal basin was being excavated, and the walls built in the most substantial manner. The coming of spring is also noticed, with due respect. It contains also (as what issue of the press the world over does not?) in *juxta* position, deaths and marriages! The deaths were the wife of Eri Dodge and a child of J. J. Garland. The marriage was that of a Mrs. Coon, of Reed's Grove. The man who "treed that Coon" was George Roderick, and Wm. A. Chatfield, justice of the peace, was accessory before the fact! There are also two poetical effusions, inspired by the occasion of the first paper, one by Leila B. M.—I am not able to tell who she was. The other bears the initials, M. N. H., which should be read backwards, and will give the initials of a well-known citizen, who has often been guilty of a like offence, and yet he still lives! The further history of this press is deserving of

brief notice. It passed in a short time into the hands of D. L. Gregg, a lawyer, and a brilliant young man, who was a prominent politician of those days, and who edited the paper and published it in company with a printer of the name of Hudson. He, Gregg, was afterwards a member of the legislature, and then Secretary of State, and afterwards United States Consul to the Sandwich Islands, and at the time of his death was Receiver of a land office in Carson, Nevada. The press afterwards passed into the possession of persons on the east side of the river, and was about to be removed, and to be edited by Wm. E. Little, Esq., who will be remembered as one of our most prominent and brilliant lawyers and politicians. It was understood, that under his control it would oppose the interests of "Long John," who was a candidate for nomination to Congress. Hence it became an important matter for "Long John" to have the *Juliet Courier* silenced, for a time at least. Just before the press was removed, some one, between Saturday night and Monday morning, gained access to the room where it was, and an essential part thereof was abstracted. I do not know that it was ever known who perpetrated the outrage. But it was known that "Long John" was in town the Saturday night before it occurred. A poor substitute was procured after some delay, and the paper made a short fight against Long John. But it availed nothing, and it was afterwards obliged to swallow all it had said, and advocate his election.

But to return to the old stone block. In another of these third story rooms was set up the first theatre which visited Joliet. I do not mean to discuss the question of the moral influence of theatres. I do not think this the province of the historian. Happily, however, there is no need, for they no longer exist, and the whole question has been most curiously relegated to the domain of dead issues, by the establishment of the modern institution of the "Opera House." But in those days we had theatres, and the one of which I speak had no such invidious distinctions as "parquette," "box," or even "reserved seats." "First come, first served," was the rule, so that it at least taught the democratic doctrine of equality. Nothing, perhaps, could show more strikingly the contrast between that day and the present, than the room where this first

theatre was set up, and the one where we are now assembled. And I think that whatever differences of opinion may obtain respecting some of the uses to which this beautiful house may be put, all will agree that it is a matter for mutual congratulation that we have such a place, which can be appropriated not only to the uses of music and the drama, but to those of temperance and religion as well—and which is even ample enough to hold the masses which turn out to listen to a historical lecture!

The company of which I speak, was composed of "star" actors from the cities, and was supplemented by amateur performers picked up in town, for the subordinate parts. Among the latter was Charley Gardner, a lawyer, who fancied that he had a genius for the stage. On one occasion he was playing the part of Rodrigo, in *Othello*. He went through the part very well until he came to the scene in which Rodrigo is stabbed by the arch villain Iago. He received the stab all right, but forgot that persons who are fatally stabbed are expected to fall, and he maintained his upright position, until the prompter behind the scene called out to him in a voice audible all over the house: "*Die, die, you fool why don't you die?*" when, down he came upon the stage, in a style which turned "high tragedy" into "low comedy;" and the curtain fell amidst the shouts of the audience, who called an "*encore*" in yells that were terrific. An Irishman next day on being asked how he liked the performance, said: "It was all very *foine*, but that *lah-yer* made a nasty die of it!"

James McKee and wife had never been to a theatre, and one night they thought they would go and see what it was like. They went early and got front seats, and enjoyed the play very much, until when (between the acts) a ballet girl came upon the stage, and danced in such a sensational and spectacular manner, in one of her pironetts bringing her heels in such close proximity to Jimmy's head that he was disgusted, and seizing his hat he says to his wife, "Forsooth, forsooth, Sally, this is no place for us;" and they left with *their* minds fully made up as to the moral character of *that* performance.

In this old stone block was also organized the first Masonic lodge, and the first lodge of Sons of Temperance. Here also was

taught the first attempt at a "High School," by a Mr. Emerson, and also the family school of Mrs. Crowly—at one time a very flourishing Young Ladies' Seminary.

But there are other and holier associations connected with these old rooms. In November, 1838, Rev. Hiram Foote, a graduate from Oberlin, came to Joliet and commenced preaching in a little room in the second story. Soon a larger one in the third story was obtained, and fitted up for church purposes; and after a little the Rev. Lucius Foote, an evangelist of some note, and a brother of Hiram's, was induced to come and hold a protracted meeting. The result was a revival of great power, which changed the moral aspect of things in Joliet. The remnants of the old Presbyterian church organized by Mr. Prentiss, some old professors of religion who had come in subsequently, but had hid their lights under a bushel, and the new converts, were organized into a Congregational church, under the name of the "Union Church," and Hiram Foote was chosen pastor, and continued to be for three years.

The Episcopal church also occupied one of these upper rooms, under the rectorship of Rev. N. W. Bostwick, of sainted memory. Also the Congregational church formed later by B. W. Dwight, and which subsequently built the present Central church.

There, in one or the other of these upper rooms, at one time or another, have been heard the voices of the two Foote's; of the two Comstock's; of the two King's; of the two Taylor's; of Porter; of Dr. Lansing; of Dr. Post; of Dwight; of Foster; of Chaplin; of Farnham; of Strong; of Bostwick; of Bishop Chase, and others whose names have passed from recollection, proclaiming the "blessed gospel of the Son of God." There, too, have been heard the voices of Fathers Cook and Diekey; of Cross; of Allan; of Lovejoy and Codding, pleading for the slave. There have been held bible meetings, missionary meetings, anti-slavery and temperance conventions, and singing schools. Oh! how many and how precious are the memories that a sight of these old stone walls awakens in the minds of some of us whose heads are grey! Many, many are the prayers which have gone up from those "upper rooms" from voices which have changed from "prayer below" to "praise above;" and, like the "upper room" in which the dis-

oples gathered after the ascension of their Lord, the presence of the Holy Spirit has been seen and felt there, and men have spoken with new tongues ; and of this man, and that man, it may be said, " he was born there,"—born to a higher life, and to a realization of the powers of the world to come ! And how many and how sweet have been the voices which have sang the songs of Zion there !—many of which are now swelling the heavenly chorus in that building not made with hands, whose walls are jasper and whose gates are pearl, and joining in the ascription: " worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength, and glory and honor and blessing." Yes ! Yes ! although those old walls have since been devoted to other and baser uses—and although at times these rooms have been empty, and windowless, and rats and dogs have held high carnival there—and although other and nobler structures have arisen to answer the ends of business, and of education, and of worship, there are still left a few who can never forget the purposes which those old walls have in their day subserved. *To these*, they are

" Like the vase, in which roses have once been distilled,  
You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still !"

Sometime in March, 1837, a meeting of the legal residents of the village of Juliet, pursuant to ten days' notice, was held at the house of Fenner Aldrich, under the provisions of a general act for incorporating towns, etc. J. A. Matteson was chosen president, and George H. Woodruff clerk. This "Joel A. Matteson" is the same man who was afterwards senator, and then governor ! This George H. Woodruff is the same man who, afterwards, *was not* senator and governor ! The meeting voted upon the question whether or not the village should be incorporated, and it was decided unanimously, by seventy-eight votes, in the affirmative—not a dissenting voice. I guess this is the only public meeting ever held in Joliet where all were of one mind. In pursuance of this vote an election was held at the old " American," on the 31st of March, 1837, for five trustees, when J. A. Matteson, J. J. Garland, Daniel Reed, Fenner Aldrich and R. C. Duncan, were elected, and Dr. Scholfield was appointed clerk by the board. This

first charter election was probably full as exciting as the *last* one. The town was divided into two wards, by the river. The point contested was to get the odd trustee, as by the charter each ward had two. It was necessary to own real estate in the town to be a voter. The boys on each side counted noses, and it was found that the west ward had a small majority. There were some then on the east side who were not willing to be fairly beaten. A plan was accordingly devised to overcome this majority. There happened to be a circus in town, and Charley Sayer executed to thirty-six of the circus employes a deed of a lot, supposed to be somewhere in Bowens' addition, and they were allowed to swear in their votes! This gave the victory to the east side. But although the concoctors of the scheme were so elated at their success that they had a big drunk over it, I don't think they ever reaped any material advantage from it. One good thing, however, came out of the affair. Of course the circus boys did not stay to look after the lot and pay the taxes, and Charley Sayer would'nt, so our worthy citizen, N. H. Cutter, bid it off at a tax sale for a poor widow, Margaret McGinnis, who built a little house on it, and so got a home very cheap, which she occupied many years. It is the same lot now occupied by Mrs. Glass.

The principal work done by this board was the building of the two bridges, of which I spoke in my former lecture. The contract was let to Chester Ingersoll at \$3000. Script was issued for \$3,500, bearing twelve per cent. interest, and it was greedily taken. These were the bridges destroyed by the flood of 1838, as before described. A new board was elected in the spring of 1838, which consisted of Amos Fellows, George H. Woodruff, Bennett Allen, John C. Newkirk and William A. Boardman. At this election, as there was no circus handy, the west side had the odd trustee. There is not much to report of their doings which would be of interest now. They gathered up the debris of the bridges—established a ferry, and built a foot bridge. Let me say, in passing, that this ferry boat was built by our worthy citizen, Otis Hardy, for the sum of \$75.50. I do not know as he ever built any more boats, but he has done something since in the way of building churches, (without pay), and his life has been rich in other good deeds, for

which the Lord reward him! But this board did not dig any "dutch gap canals," or sink any artesian wells. The public necessities did not then require them. They probably acted very much as city fathers do in these days—ground their little hatchets, if they had any, intent upon the public good! And I wish to say here, that I am perfectly satisfied with one year's experience as a city father! I felt glad, and greatly relieved, when the last democratic caucus adjourned and did not nominate me for alderman! I am conscious that I am not fitted for the position. I can find fault with what others do, as well as the best, but don't want to "run the machine" myself. I might even do worse than others have done, and that would be needless. And I have no ax, or even a hatchet to grind. We don't want a town clock on our side, for we have the "*Deacon's*" *watch* and *Woods' thermometer*, and these keep us all right! This town organization continued until the spring of 1841, when it was repealed by an act of the legislature, at the instigation of some of our citizens who had become tired of "playing city."

But besides the honor of being a city father, I have discovered that in this same year, 1838, I also filled another exalted position. I was County Judge! or Judge of Probate. I had forgotten it, but so it was. Judge Henderson had held it the year before, and though an able lawyer, he could never find out either how to settle an estate under the probate law, as it then existed, or how to get any money out of the office, and he resigned. It was thought that probably a man who knew nothing about law could succeed better, and so I was chosen. But although I had just the qualification that seemed to be needed, I did not succeed any better, and was as glad to get rid of the office as Judge Henderson. Abijah Cagwin succeeded me, and as he held on to the office for three or four years, I suppose he found out how to do it. It guess he drop't the LAW altogether, and run it on "general principles." And here I have to say, that both Mr. Cagwin and myself have been shamefully treated by this community. Who has ever called either of us *Judge?* or prefixed "*Hon.*" to our names? I have been called "doctor," and "deacon," and Cagwin is known only as "Uncle Bige." Now I don't know how "Uncle

"Dige" feels about it, but I insist upon my rights, and hope that 'ere I die I shall have tardy justice done me in this matter, for I flatter myself that I have as large an *understanding* as some of my successors who have been more fortunate. I am not particular which title you apply, "Hon." or "Judge,"—either will do. Yes, I *have* got a choicer in the matter—please let it be Judge. If it should be "Hon." some might think I had been to Congress or the Legislature!

I must mention one more personal matter, and this I hope will be the last. My first term as Recorder expired in 1838, and I was elected to the second term by Charles Gardner, Esq. Robert C. Duncan was nominated by the democrats, and I ran on my "own hook," as the representative of whiggery, temperance, abolition, and every other mean thing. As the canal was being dug, there was no lack of democratic voters. There was a fine stock of them all the way from Chicago to La Salle. Of course I was beaten. They could beat anybody then.—I am afraid they hav'nt forgot how. And that's what an old democrat, friend Clement, thinks, too! But when the judges met to canvass the returns, the poll books of this precinct and of Lockport, in which the canal vote was given, were found missing, and nobody could tell what had become of them. This gave me a handsome majority, and I was declared elected, and to save the county the *expense of another election*, I most *magnanimously* accepted of the office! Charley Gardner always had the credit of doing this job, and though it was not done from any love to me, I wish to take this, the first public opportunity I have had, to thank him. I feel the more obliged to do this, as it must have been from the abundant receipts of the office during the era of "hard times," that I laid the foundation of my immense fortune! Charley is now somewhere in Oregon, but of course the fame of this lecture will reach him there!

I suppose most of you have noticed an old stone building a little way above the middle bridge, fronting on the canal, and also on Bluff street. This was the first Foundry in Joliet, and the second one in the State—that of Gates, in Chicago, being the first. This was built in 1840, by M. L. Alams. In building his furnace he had great trouble to find stone that would stand the heat,

and no fire brick could be got nearer than Buffalo. "Hoosier" Smith shewed him some stone in his chimney in the old log house which stood near, and told him where he procured the same. Adams saw that it was just what he wanted—sand stone. So next day he started for the Au Sauble with five teams, to get a lot. He found the place somewhere near where the canal crosses the Au Sauble, and forthwith began to quarry. While engaged at this, one of his men who had been a miner in the old country, said that that was the kind of rock which overlaid coal, and he believed that coal could be found there. So they dug down about five feet, and sure enough they found coal. He loaded two of his wagons with sand stone, and three of them with coal, and returned to town. The next morning, the discovery being noised around, there was great excitement over the coal, and a company went down next day to see the spot. Some of them, it was said, got excited with something besides coal. This was the first discovery of coal north of Peoria. Adams took a load into Chicago and sold it to Gates, and this was the first load of Illinois coal taken into Chicago. After Adams got his foundry in operation he manufactured stoves for William Blair, then the first hardware and stove dealer of Joliet, now one of the "heavy men" of Chicago, and one of the best men, too! Mr. Adams claims that these were the first stoves manufactured in the State. He also manufactured the castings for McCormick's reapers, then just starting on the Au Sauble. McCormick tried to get Matteson and Demmond to join him in setting up an establishment in Joliet. That was the time we missed a good thing.

This old foundry took it into its head to blow up one day, and the engineer, a little dutchman named Swatts, was found buried in the debris, and carried home on a board, supposed to be dead. His family made great lamentations over him, and the neighbors and doctors examined him, and removed the sand and dirt. No external mark of injury was found upon him, and after a little while he opened his eyes and recovered his speech, only however to insist that he was a dead dutchman. But after a more critical examination the doctors assured him that he was not hurt, and he

got up and went about his business, very much disappointed and disgusted at the result !

A little farther up Bluff street, on the corner of Spring, there was once another stone building, which, in its time, was a flourishing steam flouring mill. No trace of it now remains. This mill had a curious origin and history. In the year 1839 a Mr. Jones, a retired and wealthy merchant of New York, became interested in the project of a steam plow, which he thought would revolutionize western farming, and wholly supersede the "Hoosier" and his long and slow breaking team. I do not know whether or not he originated the thing, but at any rate he had it constructed in Brooklyn, from drafts and models which he had furnished, and had it transported to Chicago, and from Chicago it was brought by ox power to Joliet, requiring forty loads to accomplish it. He had it set up in the vicinity of Spring street—a great unwieldy monster of a thing it was, and the engine which he had attached to it could not even move it, much less would it plow a four-foot furrow, as he had designed it to do. So the thing was abandoned and was disposed of piece-meal—the iron supplying the blacksmith and the foundryman, and the wood work the wagonmaker. But he thought that he could utilize the boiler and engine. So he got Allen Pratt to put up a stone building on the corner of Spring and Bluff streets, on a lot which was then a ravine, and he bought two sets of fancy mill stones, very small, both stones revolving in opposite directions, which he expected would revolutionize the art of milling. He obtained millwrights from Chicago, who constructed his mill after his ideas. When all was ready, after great outlay of money, it was found that the engine would drive the stones, and the stones would grind the wheat, but they created so much heat that they cooked it too. So he had the whole thing torn out, engine and all, for that was not powerful enough for the old-fashioned kind of mill, and he put in a new engine and the old-fashioned stones, and in time, after spending a small fortune, he had a good mill. He put it in charge of a nephew of his, who was not a success as a miller, and after a few years he got tired of keeping up the thing, and sold out to a Mr. Stewart, who turned it into a planing mill. This took fire one morning and burned down, and

so the old mill passed into history. But there were some good things growing out of this. It brought down from Chicago one of our good citizens, Mr. Keegan, who resides on Centre street. It was also the means of starting Charlie Smith on the high road to fortune. Charlie was one of the sons of "Hoosier" Smith, as we always called Barton Smith, to distinguish him from the rest of a somewhat numerous family.

He had the job of hauling the steam plow from Chicago, by which he made about eight hundred dollars. With this capital he commenced the business of peddling clocks. It used to be thought that only a Yankee born could peddle clocks; but Charlie, although a born Tennessean, made as successful a clock peddler as if he had originated in the land of wooden nutmegs. The profits of his clocks he invested in cattle, and the profits of his cattle he invested in land, and he is now one of the greatest land holders and stock dealers in our county, and a highly respected citizen of the town of Channahon.

In the new map of Will county you can see a picture of his fine residence and plantation, and a sprinkling of his horses and mules. It is said to be a good place to get dinner—I have never tried it, but I mean to, some day. N. B.—This is *not* an advertisement!

Another old stone building which once had an existence and a history, but has now gone to the limbo of things that *were*, was the old stone jail, which stood nearly on the ground occupied by the present one. This was built in 1837, by Blackburn & Wilson, contractors for the county agents, at a cost of two thousand dollars, and answered the purposes of jail, jailor's house, and court room, until our present court house was built. The court room was also used for public meetings, and also for religious services on the Sabbath. It was in connection with this old room that the first Baptist church was organized. I remember a protracted meeting held there by a Mr. Powell, an evangelist of that denomination, an able and excellent man, which resulted in a revival of considerable power.

To add variety to this narrative, I will now give you a murder story. You remember that I mentioned in my former lecture the

name of C. C. Van Horne as one of the first settlers on Hickory. He was one of the most prominent men of our earliest times—a man of strong mind and of good information and education, very positive and self-assured, tenacious of his own opinions, and persistent in carrying out his plans and convictions. Such a man would have strong friends and bitter enemies. That Van Horne had enemies, the following narrative will show.

In the summer of 1840, an old man over six feet high, very spare, and afflicted with some kind of nervous affection which rendered him liable to sudden fits, passed through this place on his way to his former home in Pennsylvania. He traveled on foot, and gave his name as Kramer. He had paroxysms of extreme suffering, when he was entirely helpless, and at the mercy of whoever might find him. After leaving Joliet, the first heard of him was in an old deserted blacksmith shop, near the residence of the late Samuel Haven, about ten miles east of this, where he was found in one of his fits. He was taken to the house of a Mr. McLaughlin near by. His clothes were examined by those who found him, and a considerable sum of money was found, the amount ascertained, and left upon him. After partially recovering he went on his way, and was again found helpless by some travelers in the vicinity of "Skunk Grove." They brought him back to the head of Hickory and left him at the house of a settler, some relation of Van Horne. The old man muttered, somewhat incoherently, about having been robbed, and on examination no money was found upon him. After lingering a few days he died, and was buried by charity, on the north side of the creek, near the residence of Chester Marshall. The coffin, it was stated by the man who made it, was long enough for a man six foot three.

A good deal of excitement arose about the missing money, and the McLaughlins were suspected of having robbed the old man. Van Horne was outspoken in the matter, and did not scruple to avow his belief. The matter was taken up by the grand jury, and a bill was found against young McLaughlin. In procuring this indictment Van Horne was active. Young McLaughlin gave bail for his appearance at court, and when the term of court came on, he started on foot for town, as he gave out, but he never made his ap-

pearance at the court house. The Van Horne party said that he had run away to avoid trial. But old man McLaughlin alleged that he had been foully dealt with, and charged it upon the Van Hornes, who he claimed were the real robbers of old Kramer, and were afraid to have his son's case come on lest the truth should come out. He spent days in traveling up and down the creek, and searching the woods for his lost son, and made so many demonstrations of this kind that he got up a good deal of sympathy, and a portion of the community were disposed to believe him, and many turned out to assist him in the search. Just above the spot where the Rock Island Railroad crosses the creek, some of you have probably noticed a pond and a saw mill. This was in existence at that time, and the creek at that point was then heavily timbered on either side. Many went up from this place, for by this time the excitement had become very great, and the woods were thoroughly searched for the missing man. A wagon track was discovered running by a blind road from the house of one of the Van Hornes to the pond, and a wheelbarrow track from the place where the wagon track terminated to the edge of the water, and in the mill was found a wheelbarrow, on which there was found some hair. Thereupon the pond was drawn down, and the body of a man considerably decayed was found. Old McLaughlin was told of the discovery, and he immediately said that if it was the body of his son, certain teeth would be found missing. The body was examined, and found to correspond with McLaughlin's description. The excitement now became intense. A coroner's jury was called, and an investigation was had. The body was much decayed, but so far as it could be examined, it seemed to be that of a man much older and taller than young McLaughlin, who, according to the testimony of those who knew him, was some six inches shorter, and who had long black hair; while he had not been missing long enough to present such an appearance. But notwithstanding these discrepancies in the appearance of the body as found, and the missing man—as old man McLaughlin and his wife both swore positively that they believed it to be the body of their son—the jury "found" that it was the body of young McLaughlin. They did not bring a charge against any one, but McLaughlin swore out a

warrant and had Van Horne arrested, and he was brought to town for examination. McLaughlin employed Newkirk & Wilson to conduct the prosecution. Public opinion was divided. Some were ready to hang Van Horne without judge or jury. Others refused to believe that the body found was that of young McLaughlin. I had my office with Newkirk & Wilson, and I well remember the eagerness of old McLaughlin to fasten the charge on Van Horne. It became an object, of course, for those who sided with Van Horne, to ascertain whose was the body that was found. At length the grave of old Kramer was thought of, and a delegation sent up to examine, when it was found that it evidently had been disturbed within a little time, and when the coffin was examined it was found without a tenant.

While this party was absent a surveillance had been put upon the post office, and a letter having come for old McLaughlin, mailed somewhere in Pennsylvania, it was opened by consent of the postmaster and found to be written by the missing son. The tide of public opinion had already turned, when the grave was found empty, and now those who had been eager to hang Van Horne, were still more eager to hang McLaughlin and his wife. But they had got wind of the turn the matter had taken in time to make good their escape, and the places which had known them in Will county, knew them no more! It is evident that old McLaughlin and his wife and son, had conspired to ruin Van Horne, and that they had dug up the body of Kramer, refilled the grave, taken it two miles to the pond, and having examined it close enough to detect the missing teeth, deposited it in the pond. They had taken the wagon of Van Horne, drawn it down to the pond and back, to turn suspicion upon him. Some labor it must have required, and some nerve too, to have gone through with this during the short hours of a summer's night. But there can be no doubt that they did it, and I presume they would have carried out their plan, even to the hanging of Van Horne, without flinching, if they had not been detected. This is the murder story. I hope you are not disappointed because there was no murder! There was at least a "*corpus!*"

Suppose now, for variety, we take a "wolf hunt." This was

one of the recreations of "Forty Years Ago," combining with it utility; for, in the early days, wolves were very numerous, and very destructive to sheep and poultry. So much of an object was it to get rid of them, that the state or county paid a bounty on each one killed. "Wolf scalps" thus became "legal tender." Besides the ordinary way of killing them by traps and poison, wolf hunts used to be organized. I attended one in the fall of 1842. By pre-concerted arrangement, on an appointed day, at an early hour, the settlers living all around the area which was to be hunted over—well mounted—formed a circle, the diameter of which was from twenty to thirty miles, and the centre near "Twelve Mile Grove." Each settlement formed that part of the line nearest to it, and stretching out, sparsely at first, each person riding over a considerable space to insure a thorough traverse of the ground, gradually worked toward the centre, scaring up any wolves or deer that might be found lurking in the sloughs. No one was allowed to fire, the sole aim being to turn everything toward the centre, and thoroughly to canvas the territory. The shooting was to be done by chosen marksmen when the cordon had been drawn so close as to prevent an escape. Such was the "modus operandi" of a wolf hunt.

I know of but few things which are so truly exhilarating, so full of physical enjoyment, as a ride on horseback—if the health be vigorous, the day fine, and the horse spirited and easy. The excitement of the animal spirits, both of the horse and the rider, seems to create so strong a sympathy between them as almost to realize the old fable of the "Centaur." All these circumstances combined to make our first experience of a wolf hunt thoroughly enjoyable, at least at the outset. It was one of those beautiful days of the early November, to which the name of "Indian Summer" has been given—when the sun, mellowed by that peculiar smokey haze which then obtains, vouchsafes his blandest smiles. Summer seems to have come back to bid the earth one more good bye, and to linger, as if unwilling to go and leave the scenes she had warmed and beautified, to the cold embrace of winter. The woods have exchanged their summer greenness for their garniture of crimson and gold—and the Blue Gentian, last of all the beauteous sister-

hood of flowers, remains to grace the parting, and enlivens the otherwise sere and colorless prairie. It is a luxury to breathe the pure, crisp air, of the early morning, and to scour over the billowy prairie, still unvexed by the plow and unimpeded by fences—for the cultivation is still confined to the edges of the prairie near the timber, and once beyond this narrow limit, we may go where we will. We pity those who have stayed at home in the dull and sleepy village. We fancy ourselves Bryant's "Hunter of the Prairies," and shout as we course over the ground—

"Aye, this is freedom! these pure skies  
Were never stained with village smoke,  
The fragrant wind that o'er them flies  
Is breathed from wastes by plow unbroke!"

On, on we go, inhaling health and pleasure; the bounding pulse, the heaving lungs, and glowing skin, joyfully responding to nature's bracing tonic. We scare up now and then a graceful deer, or a sneaking wolf, from their lair in the sloughs, and grouse and quails at every step. But what is that pretty little black and white animal on yonder ridge? This is something new, and we give chase. A fierce dog is already on his track, and we follow eager to protect the weak and frightened animal from harm. It looks like a cat, but it cannot be—a cat would never venture so far from home; or, is it a rabbit; yes, it must be, and we are in thorough sympathy with Cowper in his hatred of cruel sports, and resolve that this poor weak hare also, shall be saved from the cruel dog that is already close upon it. We put spurs to our good horse and press on, when—whew! Shade of Lubin! what is that? Odors from Araby! Balm of a thousand flowers! Sweet south wind over a bank of violets! The dog beats a hasty retreat, and we follow with hand on nose as fast as our good horse can go. We waste no more sympathy on pretty little black and white animals, on the prairie. Weak! so far from that, this is the *strongest thing* we ever encountered. Not until we have got a good distance to the windward, do we philosophically admire that compensating provision of nature which furnishes every animal with some means of defense!

Well, about three o'clock the circle has become sufficiently con-

tracted. Most of the area can now be seen. A halt is ordered, and the chosen marksmen step into the area and commence the work of destruction. We do not care to witness this. For the wolves we have no great sympathy—but it is not a pleasant sight to us to see a pretty deer fall before the rifle of the hunter, and when one breaks through the cordon and makes his escape we wish him god-speed. Besides, it is getting late, and we are ten or twelve miles from supper and a bed, which begin now to seem very desirable objects. So we turn our horse's head toward home, not caring to wait for a share in the wolf scalps, or in the feast of venison with which the hunt is to be crowned. We soon find that we have to pay for our pleasure by a ride home against a cold wind, which, hungry as we are, and tired, quite takes all the poetry out of the thing; and by the time we reach home we are so thoroughly demoralized that we creep up to our little crib firmly resolved that this, our first wolf hunt, shall also be our last!

I was confirmed in this resolution, when at the next prayer meeting at the old Union church, to which I then belonged, a sanctimonious brother, an Englishman of the name of Waters, took us to task for joining in worldly amusements! To be sure the effect of this rebuke was somewhat weakened soon after, when this same sour-visaged brother indulged himself in the worldly amusement of *thrashing his wife!*

There is one name which ought to have honorable mention in a history of Will county. Peter Stewart was born in Scotland, in the year 1783, at "Callentyle Ford," in the parish of "Callender," the spot made classic by the muse of Walter Scott, as the scene of the encounter between Roderick Dhu and Fitz James. He came to the United States in 1818, married and settled in Amsterdam, N. Y., where he resided until 1835, when he visited this county and purchased land near Winchester, now Wilmington, and removed his family there in 1836. Mr. Stewart was a man of considerable wealth, which he had made by his shrewdness and energy in connection with public works. He held the position of superintendent of this canal after its completion. He laid out an addition to Wilmington on Forked Creek, and I believe built a saw mill thereon, and erected a fine mansion on the bluff overlooking

that stream and the broad and beautiful Kankakee, into which it empties at this point. Wilmington had early attracted attention as a most desirable locality, on account of its water-power and the beautiful country by which it is surrounded. At that day no one had suspected that such vast deposits of coal underlayed the prairie on the south. He built, as I have said, a mansion, which is even now a large and fine one, but for that day was almost palatial. He came here in the full vigor of manhood. He was a Scotch Presbyterian, but—or, rather, *of course*—liberal and catholic in his views and feelings. He was a strong advocate of temperance and abolition—always outspoken in his convictions, but courteous and full of Scotch humor and bonhomie. Such a man of course made his influence felt in the county, in church and public affairs. He was for many years the main stay of the Presbyterian church at Wilmington, and a liberal supporter of all moral and philanthropic movements. We always expected to see “Uncle Peter” at all conventions held in the interest of morals and religion, and always drew upon him at sight for liberal contributions, and such drafts were never dishonored. Of Mrs. Stewart, his wife, I know not how to speak in language which will express the admiration and regard which the remembrance of her awakens. Although it is now many years since she passed from earth—she died in 1846—her memory is still green in many hearts. I can only think of her as perfectly *at home* in the society of those precious women who ministered to Christ in the days of his flesh, who were “last at the cross, and first at the sepulchre.” Well, well do I remember the sadness which fell upon many hearts in Joliet when the tidings came that Mrs. Stewart was dead. Those who ever enjoyed the hospitalities of the Stewart mansion will never forget that pleasant home on the banks of the Kankakee, much less those who made it so rich a treat to make a visit to Wilmington in those early days.

From what has been said, it will be easily inferred that the house of Peter Stewart was one of the stations on the “underground railroad.” This was so. His house was always open to the fugitive. Indeed, he used to be called the president of the road.

On one occasion he had a specimen of the kind on hand, and he took him to a public meeting, where he trotted him out to tell his story. But the poor fellow was so much embarrassed—having never been lionized before—that he made a complete failure—could'n't say a word. Jonathan B., who had hung out a law shingle in Wilmington, having studied in Joliet, and who had spoiled a good cabinet-maker to make an ordinary lawyer, thought it was a good chance to banter "Uncle Peter" a little, so he says to him, "Mr. Stewart, hadn't you better keep this fellow here and make a preacher of him?" "Na, na," says Uncle Peter, "we're ga'en to send him to Joliet, and make a *lah-yer* of him!" Mr. Stewart died in 1868, at the ripe age of eighty-five.

Some explanation may be necessary to the younger portion of my audience in respect to the institution of which I have spoken as the "underground railroad." For their information, then, I would say, that in the times of which I speak, there were scattered all over the northern states, (and some few also in the south) a class of men who had imbibed the fanatical idea that "all men were created free and equal, and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among which were life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." I quote the language of an ancient document on which they greatly relied to justify themselves in these notions. They inferred from this dogma that our southern brethren were wrong in holding four millions of their fellow-men in bondage. It was an easy corollary of this—that the slave had a perfect right to run away from his master, and seek refuge from the talons of the American Eagle in the arms of the British Lion, in Canada. A second inference which they drew, was, that it was right to *help* such fugitive, even although our State laws forbid them to give even a crust of bread to any one who was guilty of a colored skin. These fanatical abstract ideas took a practical form in the establishment of numerous lines of communication with Canada through the States bordering upon the Ohio. One of these lines passed through Joliet, and the first station below was Peter Stewarts, and the first one east was Samuel Haven's. I have heard it said, that here in Joliet, there were *several* places where the fugitive could find harbor! The railroad, or rather the trains upon

it, generally ran in the night only, as being better fitted for deeds of darkness.

Being acquainted with several of those fanatics, I had frequent opportunities of conversing with these fugitives, and it is a curious fact, that so ignorant were they, so dulled in moral sense, that I never found one who seemed to feel the least compunction for his escape, although he must have known that he was running off with a piece of property far more valuable than a horse! Well, these people who thus assisted this kind of property in stealing itself, were of course very obnoxious in the eyes of a virtuous community, and considered unfit for any office of responsibility, although in most other respects I am bound to acknowledge they were very good citizens. They were called by the opprobrious name of "Abolitionists,"—a name which was then considered the embodiment of everything despicable. I think time, the great adjustor, has modified somewhat this feeling against them; and this, too, although they persisted in their unwise and fanatical course, until our southern brethren were obliged to take up arms against the United States in defense of these rights!

I should not wonder if those who still survive of these old abolitionists, should look with peculiar satisfaction upon such humiliating sights as were exhibited during the past winter in Congress, when such persons as Ranney, Elliott and Cain—who at the time of which I speak would have been obliged to skulk through the free states on this underground railroad, and who if caught would have been handed over to their white masters—now boldly standing up in Congress, and presuming to reply to such men as Cox, Stephens and Robbins, gentlemen born; and not only replying, but doing it in such a masterly manner as to silence them by their superior logic and eloquence. I am afraid that these old fellows enjoy the sight of one of this despised race now filling Jeff. Davis' seat in the senate, and another owning his plantation! Something of a change, surely, since Peter Stewart, Samuel Cushing, Allen Denny and others, were indicted before the Will county circuit court for harboring and feeding just such men!

Well, such a state of things as I have described, would of course

give rise to "*incidents*." I suppose I ought to tell one to illustrate the subject.

On one occasion, there arrived here on one of the night trains, an interesting fugitive of the gentler sex—one who was fleeing from slavery, and *something worse*. It was usual to wait over until another night, but in this case there was reason to apprehend that the pursuer was close upon the track, impelled by more than one passion. Hence it was thought the safer plan to hasten on. Fortunately it was winter, and the morning was snowy and the sleighing good. So Dr. Adams, who was one of the fanatics of that day, brought out his horse and cutter, and a friend of mine, another fanatic, handed into the sleigh a lady closely veiled, and taking the ribbons, started out on a sleigh-ride. He drove boldly through the streets, returning the salutations of all he met, who naturally supposed he was taking a ride with his wife. The sleighing was good, the horse fleet, and although the morning was cold, they were nicely tucked in with plenty of blankets, buffalo robes and hot briks, while the excitement of the affair helped to render him insensible to the cold. After getting out of town he dismissed all fears of detection, and thoroughly enjoyed the romance of the situation. He felt like some Don Quixote, resuing a captive maiden from her foes. He listened with rapt attention to the thrilling story of her sufferings and her escape, not refusing to open his heart in tender sympathy, because, forsooth, her skin was tinged with olive. Thus they sped, swiftly and prosperously over the ground, until in passing through the timber at Van Horne's point, my friend having got a little careless perhaps in his driving, the cutter struck a stump, and, presto change! in the twinkling of an eye, knight errant, captive maiden, buffalo robes, blankets and hot briks, were scattered promiscuously in the snow! The horse, loosened from the cutter, went on! Here was a situation indeed! but the romance had vanished! To add to his embarrassment, they were near the house of a well-known negro hater, and he dare not apply for help, and would be only too glad if not discovered. Fortunately the horse did not go far before he stopped, turned round, and "smiling, looked upon the wreck he made." My friend approached him with the most pathetic appeals to him

to stay. The horse seemed to be touched with a pity that was more than human, and allowed himself to be caught and brought back, and attached to the cutter. But this could only be done in an imperfect manner, as the whiffletree attachment was broken. My friend had to send the rescued maiden on ahead, while he followed leading the horse. After a tramp of two miles, which the rescued maiden stood much better than he did, they arrived at the hospitable mansion of Samuel Haven, fortunately without meeting a single soul. A good dinner and plenty of hot coffee restored the spirits both of knight and maiden, and the cutter being in the meantime repaired, after a tender parting with the rescued maiden, our knight returned to the city, on the whole well satisfied with the adventure. Afterwards, however, when the story leaked out, he was not a little annoyed at times, when the neighbors asked him if he had a pleasant ride with his wife!

But it was not only the actual fugitive from slavery that was in danger of the man-stealer in this State. Our laws presumed every man who had a trace of Africian blood in his veins to be a slave, and the burden of proof was thrown upon him. If he could not show free papers he could be arrested, thrown into jail, and advertised like a stray pig, and any one who could make out a plausible claim, could take him on payment of jail and printer's fees; and if no one claimed him, he could be sold temporarily to the highest bidder, to pay the charges.

We had, here in Joliet, a colored boy of the name of Henry Belt. He was a freeman, and had in his possession a paper issued by some clerk in Pennsylvania, I think, certifying to his freedom. Henry was a barber at the Exchange, and very popular, and had many friends despite the color of his skin. He was thus exposed to the eyes of a couple of professional slave hunters. They saw that he was a nice boy, and would be worth probably two or three thousand dollars in the St. Louis market. While one of them stays to watch the game, the other went to Missouri and gets some trumped up claim for a runaway slave, answering to Henry's description. They had him arrested, and he was taken before a justice of the peace, known to be a negro-hater, and by him he was quickly handed over to the men-stealers. But Henry had friends

who would not allow this without a struggle to save him, and before they could get away with their prey a writ of habeas corpus was procured, and he was brought before the Circuit Judge for another investigation. All this of course produced great excitement. The feeling of indignation was not confined to Abolitionists. In fact the efforts in his behalf were mainly made by those who would have scorned the name. The trial came off in the old jail, (now demolished). The court room was filled to overflowing with parties for and against the victim. The men-stealers produced their proof, and Henry showed his paper. But the judge was of the same stripe as the justice, and while he summed up the matter in a long opinion worthy of "Dogberry," it became apparent how the matter would go; and when he concluded by deciding that the kidnappers should have their victim, there was great rejoicing on their part. They already began to count their chickens, and they turn round to take possession of the prize, when lo! like the Irishman's flea, he was not there! While all eyes had been intent upon the learned Judge, and all ears listening to his profound utterances, Henry's friends had quietly taken possession of the stairway and the space between it and Henry, in the supposed custody of the sheriff, and he had been very quietly slipped through the crowd, and was "*non est inventus!*" Great was the excitement when the fact was known. The kidnappers were raving. They found great difficulty in getting out of the Court House—everybody seemed to be in their way. When they got out, they and those of the crowd who sympathized, of course made at once for the houses of the "dam'd abolitionists," to search for their victim. Some admitted them—others kept them out, and demanded legal steps before they would submit to have their homes searched, which only made the kidnappers more certain that the prey was there. I remember one humble house which the crowd threatened to pull down—but they didn't. All this delay was favorable to the escape of Henry. Well, all the search was vain. Henry was nowhere to be found—never was found; and after hanging around town for a few days the kidnappers gave up the job, believing that he had escaped by that mysterious means, the "underground railroad."

The fact was, the abolitionists had nothing to do with Henry's

escape, and knew nothing about it. It was effected by different parties altogether, and Henry was concealed for a while in the old wooden block on Chicago street, which was *not an abolition block!* I guess Frank Mitchell, now of Wilmington, could tell something about it.

I believe that this occurred while Risley was sheriff. It used to be said that that old jail never could hold a negro under his administration. I do not think that this ought to subject his memory to very much obloquy.

I want you to take one more ride with me into the country. This time it is summer, and we will go on a sweet and pleasant errand—in search of *honey!* You are probably aware that the honey-bee is the precursor of civilization, and that she stores her sweets in hollow trees. Hence among the characters well known in early times, is the “bee-hunter.” We had such a one in the early day, a well-known pioneer and famous hunter. Wo to the deer on whom he “drew a sight” with his deadly rifle, and a “bee on the wing” he soon tracked to her hidden storehouse. One time some of our women heard that he had found a well-stocked bee-tree, and it was proposed that they should make up a load, and go down and have a honey feast. Some of them had often been urged by the hospitable family to make the visit. So they got up a party, and Mrs. Wilson, the wife of our well-known friend, the Judge, was invited to go along. She was a new-comer then—a bride which the Judge had just brought from Lowell. Wishing to see as much as possible of western life, she accepted the invitation, remarking that she *was very fond of honey.* Well, the distance was not far, and in due time they came in sight of the hunter’s log cabin in the edge of the timber. As they drew near they were not a little surprised to see three or four big, bounching girls come out of the house with divers articles of apparel in their hands, and disappear behind some hay stacks. They conjectured what the reason of the movement was, on entering the house and finding that it consisted of but one room, in which all the operations of eating, cooking, sleeping, washing and dressing had to be performed; and when, after a little, the girls re-appeared dressed in their best “Turkey red,” to assist their mother in entertaining the

visitors, they understood the meaning of the movement. Mrs. Wilson, to whom everything was a new experience, wondered what the girls did when they had no hay stacks. She conjectured, too, from the appearance of the two beds which occupied one end of the cabin, that of the several operations I have named, *one* was often omitted. She studied, too, on the problem how all the persons that seemed to belong to the family could be disposed of in those two beds, without violating the proprieties; never dreaming that the pegs which projected from the wall in one corner were the means of ascent to a loft above, where the *boys* could sleep, or watch the stars through the "shakes" which formed the roof. She wondered, too, where the *honey*, and other family stores could be kept, as there was no indication of closet or pantry to be seen. With such queries Mrs. W. occupied her mind, while the object of their visit had been broached by the other ladies, and the hostess commenced preparations for the feast of honey. Mrs. Wilson, who kept close watch of every movement soon saw *where they kept things*. The good hostess having freshened up the fire, and put over the bake kettle, drew forth *from under one of the beds*, an old-fashioned *cradle*, which, being for the time released from its normal use, was compelled to do duty as a flour chest. In this she mixed up the quick biscuit, which were to serve as a vehicle for the honey; and she and her girls drew forth from the same mysterious region, the various articles necessary to spread the board, and among the rest the vessel of honey so ardently longed for. Presently, all being ready, the ladies were invited to "draw up." This they eagerly did—all but Mrs. Wilson. She had not got hardened to frontier life. The close observation which she had kept upon the operations of the hostess, and the glimpses she had caught of the mysterious region where they *kept things*, had taken away her appetite. She suddenly remembered that "*honey did not agree with her, in fact always made her sick!*" And so she sat looking on with no little astonishment and disgust at the way the biscuits and honey disappeared; while the others compassionated her for her abnormal and sensitive stomach! I presume she learned, in time, that it is not best to be too fastidious, or to *watch* things too close in a new country. And that is the moral of this story.

I believe I have nowhere mentioned the name of Jesse O. Norton. It won't do to overlook the Judge in a history of the early days of Joliet, for although not among the first, he was one of our early acquisitions. He came, I believe, in 1838 or 9, and was for many years a prominent lawyer and politician, holding the offices of Probate Judge, Circuit Judge, and member of Congress. It is but a few years since he departed this life—for Chicago; and he is so well known that I need say no more. But there is a good story of him which I might tell. I couldnt tell any but a *good* one if I would, and I *would* not if I could; for having gone, as I said, to Chicago, I hold that the maxim, "nil nisi bonum mortuum," ought to apply. This story belongs to Judge McRoberts, and I only borrow it, as a man would an umbrella—for the occasion. You ought to hear the *Judge* tell it; but perhaps you never will have a chance, and so I try my hand at it, and with this I will conclude.

While Judge Norton was in Congress he availed himself largely of the "garden seed" dodge to make new friends, and show his old ones that they were remembered. I remember to have seen once, one of his rooms full of great bags of seeds—enough to stock a Rochester seed store. Well, one time he received through the postoffice a box marked "Yam Seed." He took it up to his office, opened it, and saw that it was full of a very fine seed, which looked—for all the world—just like sand. Now Horticulture was not the Judge's "strong hold," in fact he knew no more about seeds than a man "living in the tropics knows of icicles." Of course he had no idea what "yam seed" was, or how it ought to look; but he was very much gratified that Uncle Sam had sent him such a fine lot for distribution. He left the box on his desk and went out to invite some of his friends to come up and get some "yam seed." While he was gone his partner happened to come in, and noticed the box; running his fingers down into it, he fished out three or four little tubers, about the size of your finger—the real "yam seed." These he laid away in his desk, smoothed over the contents of the box, and sat down to business. Soon Norton came in, with three or four friends he had found, and some wrapping paper, and proceeded to distribute freely of the "yam seed." Some remarked how fine it was, and how much it

looked like sand. "Oh, yes," says the Judge, "it does indeed, but I have just got it out of the post office, and it's all right—a very valuable thing it is—take it home and sow it, and let me know what you think of it." His partner kept dark, although it was hard work to keep from an explosion. Norton kept on some days dispensing his "yam seed." At last he got hold of a man who knew what "yam seed" was, and then the joke came out, and poor Norton found that *he had been distributing, and his friends had been sowing Potomac sand, for "Yam Seed!"*

N. B.—Chicago papers are forbidden to copy this story, as it has been copyrighted—for the benefit of Judge McRoberts.

Probably, the most sensible way in which I could close this lecture, would be simply to stop! But bear with me while I indulge in a parting word or two. The work of gathering these reminiscences has been a labor of love. I came to this spot when a young man, and here I deposited my first ballot, and here I have lived almost forty years. Within this period, many have been born and died. Nine presidential elections have agitated the country. Two wars have stirred our patriotism, and sacrificed our brothers and sons. Slavery has been abolished throughout the land. Railroads, of which there was then less than fifty miles, now spread like a spider's web over all our territory, and bring into neighborhood the Atlantic and the Pacific. Immense territories have been added to our domain, yielding their rich products and deposits to the labor of our people. How much, how much, of human history has been crowded into this forty years! The mind is overwhelmed at an attempt to realize it.

I love my native State, especially that beautiful spot in the valley of the Oriskany where I was born; but, most of all, I love *this spot*, where I have lived these forty years of my manhood, and where I expect to die. I love its memories and associations, sad though many of them are. All these years I have watched the growing city, from almost the first log hut to this just completed Opera House. It is hardly an exaggeration to say, that I have seen every plank and every stone that have gone into its construction. And though very little of it all stands in my name upon the county records, (for which I am devoutly thankful once a

year!) yet it is all—all mine; for I have the highest, richest use of it all!

A splendid sight it used to be, in the early days, when the city had not extended beyond Scott street on the east, when the rank grass of the slough and of the spring creek bottom were burning over at night! A cordon of fire, with its fierce, roaring and hurrying flames, stretched from the river below all around the east to the river again on the north, lighting up the whole heavens with its lurid glow. It almost seemed an anticipation of the final conflagration. And when, its force having been spent, there was left all along its track, the scattered fires of the still burning hillocks, it needed but little imagination to fancy them the camp-fires of a mighty host beleaguering the city.

But it is a *richer*, if not so grand a sight, now to look out at night from the same bluff upon the extended city, and see the gas lamps in long array up and down the streets, like sentinels keeping watch over the place; and the other lights which shine out from thousands of homes, telling of the happy families gathered around the evening lamp;—and looking northward, see the great fires of the iron mills belching forth their lurid flames from so many chimneys—seeming to realize the fables of Tartarus, and of Vulcan and his Cyclops, forging the thunderbolts of Jupiter.

And a beautiful sight it is now, in the early morning, to look out again upon the awakening city, and note the great columns of smoke and steam going up from its mills, and foundries, and manufactories; and mingling with these the lesser columns, ascending from thousands of fire sides, telling of the happy families gathered again around the morning meal;—and, added to these, the long trails of smoke and steam which stretch out after the flying railway trains, like great anacondas in swift pursuit. These are sights of which the eye never tires, and never will tire, until closed in its last sleep. And this suggests my closing thought. On all these wooded bluffs which encircle the city and so delight the eye, whether in their summer greenness or in the rich and varied hues of autumn, there is left only here and there an aged oak, of all the trees which clothed them forty years ago. All the rest have given place, one by one, and year after year, imperceptibly but surely,

to another growth, younger and more vigorous. So now, among all those who walk our streets and fill these homes and places of business, there is left only here and there a whitening head of those who witnessed the beginnings of which we have been speaking. And "yet a few days," and *these*

"The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course!"

Does this seem a sad refrain with which to close? It will not, if we have given heed to those other words of the same sweet poet:

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan, that moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon,—but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams!"

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## APPENDIX.

### NOTES AND CORRECTIONS.

I. In the list of first settlers on Hickory Creek, page 13, the name of "Henry Watkins" should be substituted for that of "Peter Watkins," and the latter name should be added to the Jackson Grove list, and it was the son of the latter who taught the school in that locality. The sons of Henry Watkins were, John (the old school teacher) and Morgan, a well-known citizen and soldier. John Watkins came to Chicago in 1832, just as Scott was leaving for the West after the close of the war. He opened a school in an old log stable on the North side, near the river. After a little he got better quarters, in Father Walker's (the old pioneer) double log house. In one end of this Walker lived, and in the other held his meetings, and this room he allowed Watkins to occupy with his school. Thus, then, as in all its history, has the living Church fostered education.

It was in 1836 that John Watkins came to Joliet, and taught in the old school house on the classic borders of Comstock's pond.

II. An error also occurred in the date of the first Fourth of July celebration. It should have been 1836, one year later. I am glad that I have discovered this error in time to be corrected here, as it was putting altogether too much upon one day—the first celebration of our Independence, and the first wedding celebration too! Besides, it subjected my credibility as a historian to a pretty severe strain when I made “the Doctor” read the Declaration, after partaking of that wedding collation!

III. I was also wrong in the conjecture that Edward Poor was the first settler in Yankee Settlement. Mr. Poor himself, states that Mr. Pettyjohn was the first, having come as early as 1829.

IV. Some few typographical errors have escaped correction, which my readers (if I should have any) can correct for themselves.

P. S.—The writer was not strong in the Latin forty years ago;—it is not strange, then, that after so many years' rust, he should have blundered in quoting the maxim, “*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*” on page 103. For the benefit of those who may know even less Latin than he does, he now gives it in English: ‘ Of the dead, (speak) nothing but good.’

The following list of business men and firms, and professional men and mechanics, who flourished during the first decade of our history, may be interesting to some:

**MERCHANTS AND GROCERS.**

William Sheriff.  
W. H. Deimond.  
A. W. Bowen.  
Russel Frary.  
Charles Clement.  
Bassett & Colton.  
John L. & Richard L. Wilson.  
George Woodruff.  
Fellows & Doolittle.  
J. A. Matteson.  
Deimond & Woodruff.  
Deimond, Curry & Co.  
Clement & Wilcox.  
Wm. Blair & Co.  
B. & T. Allen & Co.  
Wm. G. Hubbard & Co.  
Roberts & Whitehead.  
Henry Baily & Bro.  
George West.  
Daniel Rattray.  
F. Mack, *Boots and Shoes.*  
Wm. H. Brown,  
Davis & Burgess.  
Taylor, Breeze & Co.

Tuthill King, *Clothing.*

J. A. Smith, *Hats and Caps.*

Elias Haven.

R. E. W. Adams, *Drugs.*

Haven & Rood, “

Adams & Glover, “

Glover & Woodruff, “

Geo. H. Woodruff, “

Scholfield & Little, “

Allen Pratt.

O. H. Pratt & Co.,

J. W. Taylor.

Franklin, Mitchell & Rolf.

Hopkins & Morris.

Finch, Lowe & Green.

Matteson & Shoemaker.

R. C. Duncan.

Duncan & Fiske.

John B. Woodruff.

McDougall & Cagwin.

Daggett & Chatfield.

Wm. Walters.

S. B. Brown.

J. J. Garland, *Clothing.*

Lewis Mason.

## LIST OF BUSINESS MEN, ETC.—Concluded.

C. S. Fassett.	D. L. Gregg, <i>Lawyer.</i>
Frank Baker.	Chas. Gardner, "
Aaron Kinney, <i>Jeweler.</i>	R. E. W. Adams, <i>Physician.</i>
Mr. DeBerard, "	Daniel Reed, "
Charles Sayer, <i>Tailor.</i>	A. W. Bowen, "
Burton & Reader, "	M. K. Bromson, "
George Squires, "	J. S. Glover, "
F. Nicholson, "	A. M. G. Comstock, "
Abel Gilbert, <i>Wagonmaker.</i>	— Little, "
J. Beaumont, "	Wm. Scholfield, "
R. House, "	Curtis Haven, "
Joel George, <i>Carpenter.</i>	Simon Z. Haven, "
O. F. Rogers, "	J. D. Balch, <i>Printer.</i>
Otis Hardy, "	— Hudson, "
— Gould, "	O. Hardy, <i>Fist Lumber Dealer.</i>
Pratt & Richardson, <i>Cabinet Makers.</i>	Benjamin F. Barker, <i>Livery.</i>
H. N. Marsh, "	HOTELS.
O. W. Stillman, <i>Shoemaker.</i>	E. E. Bush, <i>Old American.</i>
Johnson & Wilcox, "	Isaac Merrill, "
Hunter & McMasters, <i>Blacksmiths.</i>	Isaac Fillmore, "
E. R. Atwill, "	George Higley, <i>Higley House.</i>
Chas. W. Brandon, <i>Stone Cutter.</i>	— Seely, "
James Brodie, "	F. Nicholson, "
E. C. Feilows, <i>Lawyer.</i>	Elhanan Gay, <i>National.</i>
C. C. Pepper, "	Jas. A. Troutman, <i>Juliet Hotel.</i>
J. C. Newkirk, "	Wm. H. Blackburn, "
John M. Wilson, "	Fenner Aldrich, "
Uri Osgood, "	Daniel H. Wade, "
Hugh Henderson, "	Enoch S. Blackstone, <i>Exchange.</i>
Wm. A. Boardman, "	Thos. J. Wade, "
Wm. E. Little, "	Jacob Patrick, <i>Waving Banner.</i>

Besides there was a full supply of grocery-keepers, as they were then called, whose names I will not perpetuate. I suppose they kept a full supply of samples.

# FORTY YEARS AGO!

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE

## EARLY HISTORY

OF

Joliet and Will County.

BY

GEO. H. WOODRUFF.

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